





*Well do I remember many words of
gentle, but sound advice, given as-
cassions offered, by an affectionate
(Mother.)*

ADVICE TO THE TEENS;

OR,

Practical Helps

TOWARDS THE

FORMATION OF ONE'S OWN CHARACTER.

By ISAAC TAYLOR,

MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL

At Ougar.



It is in this, as in every other art or study, the foundation only is laid at school, the manner of building is indicated; the scholar may afterwards rear the superstructure, as high as his disposition and opportunities shall enable him.

CAMPBELL'S *Lectures*.

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SECOND EDITION.  
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INTRODUCTION.

CHAP. I.

TO ascertain a principle is of little use, unless we give it efficiency in our conduct. This is the end had in view by instruction, and till this appear, all knowledge is in vain. The mind, rightly principled, will be desirous to make trial, whenever a suitable and important object is placed in view. If, therefore, any are determined on seriously engaging in *Self-Cultivation*, such will be anxious to ask, what methods may most surely, or most readily tend to secure the desirable object.

Wherever we are going, it is of great importance that we ascertain the right road, and the best, at our first setting out. If any attainment seem desirable, can it be gained is a reasonable question. Ignorance and frivolity

will put it, by way of excuse for doing nothing, and will not, therefore, wait for an answer. But there are some who will not regard the labour, provided any feasible scheme is explained to them. It is only for the use of such, that any man will take the labour of instructing; and when he meets with them, the pleasure so far exceeds the fatigue, as to put it almost out of the account.

The strongest desire after self-cultivation will be but partly efficient, without some previous assistance. Improper modes may be persisted in, till much precious time is irrecoverably lost. And, though an ardent mind will always gain much by the attempt, even if not made in the most proper manner, yet it were a pity that such energies should be wasted in any degree; a pity that the greatest facilities should not be afforded to those who are willing to put them to diligent use.

Whoever admits, therefore, as a principle, that he ought to educate himself, will, if he have any vigour of mind, be anxious instantly

to begin. If conscious of having acted already much on this principle, he will be doubly glad to meet with any practical rules for assisting him in his operations. To lop one branch may sometimes clear to the eye a long vista; to conduct to one eminence may explain all the windings of the road, and encourage exertion by the certainty of success.

Desultoriness is one of the greatest impediments to our success in any attempt; yet it is one to which the active are very liable. Those who are continually changing their object, or their means, or their expectations, may exult over the idle, who attempt nothing; but their gains in the long run will be more nearly on a par than their present bustle leads them to suppose. Ever near upon their object, they yet do not attain it. One experiment more would have ascertained the proper method, and ensured the result.

He, too, who has an object in view, may gain it; but, for want of knowledge, lose also much more, which he might have gained at the

same time. The purest copper now in use, is obtained from a waste water, which had for ages been suffered to run unheeded away. Principles most commonly will apply to more than one object. A process once discovered, may, by a little adaption, serve for various productions ; or, by a slight alteration, may secure various results. He who determines to cultivate his own mind, will, if suitably instructed, gain in many modes, and grow mentally rich beyond his expectations.

Many have exclaimed with sorrow, how I wish I had known *that* when I was young ! if I had had any friend to have put me in the way, or had had but a book given me, just to open my mind : but I had to blunder on much in the dark, and have therefore made but little progress,

That must be a friendly hand which aims to guide in such important exertions. The preferred assistance will not be spurned by the intelligent ; should it happen that some parts of the advice are irrelevant, or inappropriate to

the youth's specific situation, it will be strange if an endeavour to instruct does not afford some assistance. A direct rule, or an occasional hint, may suit; a reference to some principle may elucidate, or a delineation of some admirable result charm to imitation. He that shall be warned, or directed, or animated, by the advice here given, will have no occasion to lament as a loss the money, or the still more precious time, which it may cost. Should the volume be adjudged by any one to have been of no use to him, the author and the reader must be content to divide the blame between them.

It is with the hope, however, that readers of this description will be very few, that he makes such a proposal, and that readers of quite another character will be numerous. He is conscious that in this case, dividing the credit of the result will be but justice; as whoever reads to his actual benefit, brings to the book a mind and disposition highly creditable to himself. No light could assist him who was actually blind: no painting could in-

terest any one but as he had knowledge to examine and feel the artist's skill. It is therefore to my more intelligent readers I look for approbation ; let every one, for his own credit sake, hesitate before he utterly despises what is before him.

Indeed, mere reading the book can hardly ensure a fair judgment in any case ; the advice must be taken before its value can be ascertained. The praise even which shall be assented to, before trial shall be carefully made, will demand a large discount, on the part either of author or reader. Should any, in future years, refer to some sentence in this work, as the instigating cause, or the directing rule of any mental benefit attained ; that will be the truest praise,—though it may never reach the writer, or only in that world, where men receive according to the fruit of their doings.

ADVICE TO THE TEENS,

&c. &c.



CHAP. II.

ON THE CONTINUATION OF SCHOOL STUDIES.

SO much is the time of leaving school regarded as a period of emancipation, that it is not uncommon to see, not only tutors forsaken, but the very books in disgrace, and a sort of mortal enmity arises between the young *mister* and all the old authors, as if Horace and Xenophon, Euclid and Newton, having been aiders and abettors, accessories before the fact, were condemned for all the guilt attaching to so many years ill-endured bondage. The breach is open, the quarrel serious, is never made up in after life, but perhaps boasted in; resort being made to

effrontery to repress any little misgiving, which might occasion internal uneasiness.

That is perhaps a violent case. But the same occurs in a milder form, much more frequently, with those who only neglect what the former condemn; who equally let go all the benefit which might have been secured by timely care. "Why, really, I have not looked at a Latin author since I left school," must be the answer, if one is truly given to a close and distinct question. "I have lost my Greek Testament; that and the Lexicon are, I believe, up in a drawer somewhere, but I don't know." All the money the books have cost, and all the price the tuition has cost; and what makes it worse still, all the irrecoverable time spent in idling with them, is thus rendered absolutely of no value for efficient use: the lad might as well never have had such an opportunity.

Let it then be received as an indubitable and important principle, that the studies of school must some of them be good and useful,

and worth the while to keep up. There is scarcely any one of them which ought to be neglected, or which can be forgotten without considerable hurt, either to the youth or the man. There are some of them which must be important to the specific station in view, these ought carefully to be regarded; and there may be some of them highly ornamental, polishing the mind at least, if they do not give it strength; these may be kept hold of with little trouble; little at least in the estimation of a mind capable of feeling, and enjoying, the pleasure they give. To such, indeed, there will be some danger of paying them a more than proper share of attention.

Supposing you desirous to keep up some concern in studies already attended to, it will be proper to make an arrangement of them, something like what is thus hinted at. It may possibly be found that some attainments bear so little similarity with your probable destination, that the slight acquaintance you have with them already may suffice. I am afraid, however, to mention any one specific topic, aware

that the event may perhaps show, that even had this disregarded path of knowledge been trodden a few times more, it might have been kept open, thereby preventing much labour, or a circuitous course in after life. Purposely to give up is hazardous, especially if opportunity should favour our continued pursuit. A man who starts game may watch its flight, and mark where it settles with little trouble, with much amusement, although himself should be no sportsman, or just then have neither gun nor dog with him. To make use of all one's eyes, to learn whatever one can, to be always on the alert doing something, is far better as a principle, than actually to give up any one species of knowledge.

A glance will perhaps show that some school attainments, for which the money has been paid, have been imperfectly laid hold of by the inattentive mind. A consciousness of this nature should instigate to redoubled attention. That which might pass while executed under the master's eye, and with all the helps and hints natural to a state of instruction, may,

upon trial alone, be found extremely deficient. It is worth while to make this trial, in order to ascertain the true measure of skill attained. Should it appear adequate to exertion without help, this result will be very gratifying. Should a perception of insufficiency force itself in, then will the principle of self-cultivation become of excellent use; when it stimulates to redoubled exertions, in that specific line, determined to gain at least a tolerable mastery of the qualification in question. The great danger (that is, to little minds) is, that the discovery of inability may damp all desire for excellence, the difficulty of making attainments, without an instructor at hand, which were not made with one, may seem to put an absolute negative upon all endeavour. It is, however, worth while to try; the having an instructor always at hand, to whom reference can be made, is sometimes the occasion of a pupil not putting forth his own energies, nor thinking for himself. It will augur favourably for your growing character, if the consciousness of having no assistance shall stimulate you the more earnestly to exert yourself.

Get your own mind to work, and something will be done. A few trials will possibly show that the difficulties, if great, are not insurmountable; in this case the pleasure of surmounting will well reward for the toil; and the talent thus roused into action will be secured, so that the mind will never lose it. A drawing done under the master's eye has also more or less of his hand; the knowledge of this must take off much from the pleasure of contemplating it as one's own; a slighter sketch, or, as is very possible, a more finished piece, done all alone, by the energetic exertion of one's individual taste and adroitness, will be with justice prized more highly, will gratify with the consciousness of skill, and will instigate to aim at yet higher excellence. The having no instructor on whom to rely, will, thus operating, become a happy circumstance.

It will be very possible, too, that soon after the escape from instructors, the new situation may call for exertions, the actual use of which was not foreseen by the child; the importance

of which will be now felt by the youth. This new but powerful principle of necessity will have the happiest effect, if it rouse the powers to recollect knowledge, to try again, and again, till the requisite skill be attained. To be obliged to say, "I cannot do it," will, by a youth of any proper feeling, be found extremely uncomfortable. The having been forced to make such an acknowledgment once, has operated in some minds to set them on such arduous studies in secret, as have soon qualified them sufficiently to undertake at the next necessity; and the awkward confession has been done away for ever. I have known a little disgrace of this kind have the happiest effect. And I have known, too, the having once confessed inability, become the occasion of confirmed impotence; having once stood the disgrace, it has been felt no longer: but these were either weak characters, incapable of proper feeling, or obstinate ones, of whom there was little hope. Before you yield up competition and strenuous endeavour, consider to which of these classes you wish to belong.

Flanders thus enriched, by a person whose talent at drawing was not splendid. The various places, scenes, accidents, were by this means fastened on his mind: he could travel over that journey again at any time, with little trouble, and to great gratification; and had circumstances led him to publish, these sketches, in the hands of a competent artist, might have rendered the volume of double value to the public. His rule in several excursions he made, was, to minate down whatever happened every evening, and to sketch whatever he saw which particularly gained his attention. Many gentlemen, carried by their profession abroad, have had to lament, that though they could in an intelligent manner view and describe, yet they could not depict, and have therefore sent their observations to the world destitute of the illustrations desirable; or, perhaps, for want of them, have been obliged to hide their knowledge, or confine it among a few friends.

Although I have specified only in languages and drawing, yet the reasoning will hold good

as to every other attainment. Keep what you have learned, and add to it, if possible; and the mode which renders this extremely easy is, to give a little attention to it every day. It is surprising how little will suffice for this purpose, if the mind be in it, and act with regularity.

It is very true, that when a youth leaves school, a new scene opens before him; a new set of occupations fill his time, and imperiously demand his attention; yet it seldom happens that this new train of duties is so complete, as totally to shut out all opportunity for attention to former studies. I would advise a resolute trial before such a judgment be acceded to. The case more common is, a considerable degree of idleness, in which much time is lost; or frivolity, which spends it to still greater disadvantage: against these I would protest most decidedly. A young person has not a moment to lose. If you lose money, you may gain it again; but the loss of time is irretrievable: opportunity must be taken at the moment, or it goes by, never to return. The value of the *teens* is beyond cal-

cultation ; it is the seed-time of life ; much may be done, and, if well done, the rich harvest is sure : negligence here will encumber future life, and occasion much deficiency and after loss. Let me repeat it then, a very little endeavour, regularly and statedly made, will secure, and much enlarge, all the knowledge attained at school, to your own great gratification and advantage. Now and then to read a page, will refresh the memory ; now and then to work a problem, or translate a verse, cannot be esteemed a great exertion ; yet will some such slight attention, which may fairly be stated as an amusement, produce, with considerable advantage, the effect desired.

CHAP. III.

READING.

AN author is a silent tutor; one of the cheapest, most important, convenient, and efficient, in the grand work of instruction. Persons who do not read, may pick up much by observation, but their knowledge must be comparatively scanty. An author is one who has picked up much by observation too; and if you read fifty authors, you have the advantage of fifty times the observation which can possibly come under your own eye. Nay, though a mere observer, who does not read, may gain ideas, yet on such terms, seldom is judgment attained. The ideas picked up are rather kept huddled together, than sorted, arranged, and displayed in their proper beauty. The bag may be soon filled on the sea-shore with glittering pieces; much, however, which may catch the eye is not worth preserving;

Books will be had. If the number attainable should be few, those few will be the more often read, and the better understood and digested. The poorest need not despair, even of proficiency, if only a trifling sum can now and then be spared for a book; while the richer often are half-starved, as to mentality, in the midst of a large library, untouched, or slightly scanned over.

You have some books brought from school, some presented to you, perhaps, on that occasion; regard them as a treasure; add to them as opportunity offers; you will prize them the more as your stock encreases, and especially as your acquaintance with their contents becomes more familiar, as your amusements and satisfactions are interwoven with your intimacy with them. Should you be evidently studious, you will easily find some friend who, having similar feelings, will be pleased with yours, and will be ready to foster them, by lending you from his own stores; with the additional advantage of his more ripened judgment, in selecting what is suitable

for your use, with hints and observations, guiding you to a proper understanding of the author, to a necessary caution in regard to some of his sentiments, or a peculiar recommendation of principles found to be important.

Adopt reading, therefore, as one staple means of mental improvement; and give it that sort of attention which its importance deserves. Many young persons will read a book, and are even fond of it, when they happen on one which greatly excites curiosity; when this fit is over, then for weeks, or months possibly, they never con over a single page. Such a desultory mode can seldom effect any thing of value. The mind accustomed to such fits and starts of exertion will never be healthy: like the body, it is kept up in best condition by regular, constant, and sufficient exercise; without this it will be feeble, liable to nervous irritability, and its actions will be unsatisfactory, because, although laborious, they are inefficient. Indeed, where the excitement of curiosity is the sole or principal motive for

reading, the sort of book chosen will often be not that which is likely to yield the best instruction. That curiosity must already be under good regulation which conducts to works of worth and eminence. The time given to frivolous volumes is but lost, as to self-cultivation; and although amusement may claim a share of attention, with the young especially, yet ought such a principle to be well watched, lest the share taken be exorbitant; lest it swallow up more important concerns.

To attain the love of reading, and obtain the benefit it is calculated to afford, bring it into a habit. Do not be content to read whenever you meet with an alluring author, but adopt it as a rule *always to have a book in reading*. This will not require you to be always reading that book: it will not oblige you to give more than its proper share of time and attention to this department of your duty; but rather, having determined that this is your duty, having ascertained what sort of attention you may with propriety give it, this

method will enable you to cultivate your mind efficiently, and make the most of such opportunities as you may lawfully devote thereto.

Could we, after each day, take a just retrospect of the time past, and its various modes of occupation, it would be found that there were several, perhaps small portions of it, which passed away unheeded and unimproved. Nothing immediately claimed our attention, and nothing was therefore actually attended to. Now, a book at hand would have filled up those lesser blanks of time to good purpose; five minutes now, and ten minutes then, would, in a comparatively short time, get through a volume. Some morsel of instruction, like the specks of gold obtained from the sand, would in time become a valuable store. It would not be wise in those who sift the rivers to say such little bits are not worth regarding; see how the heap rises; nor let the youth give up the habit of reading, because it is only a few minutes at a time which he can lawfully devote to it.

When there is a book at hand, the excitement of the mind is kept up ; it can seek its gratification readily, and it gains, although by slow degrees. Should the book not be determined on, or not be near, the opportunity might be lost in procuring it, or given up, in hope of some season occurring which should be more favourable. This, it might be safely predicted of such minds, they will never find. Ho who has his author at his elbow will get through many a volume, before the other will find his opportunity of selecting a work upon which to begin.

Whatever habit we allow, and especially whatever habit we deliberately form, had need be very carefully adjusted, watched, and pursued. The resolution to read, should be accompanied with a resolution to select the author, subject, and rotation, with the utmost care. A friend at hand, as has been already suggested, may be of incalculable benefit. It is needful to add, this friend should not be one young, ignorant, and prejudiced; what advice

can such a one give, better than what your own unformed judgment might suggest? The case of a youth must be rather peculiar, who has not at hand, or at least within reach, one whose years and knowledge may help to guide him, if he be truly desirous of such assistance. His first care should be to gain a judgment riper than his own. Any sacrifice of self-conceit, or pertinacity, will be well bestowed, if by such means the desired guidance may be more easily obtained.

That much depends upon the choice of authors, will appear, from considering that many men of admirable knowledge have not the knack of instructing; that many of exquisite talents are destitute of principle; that science is elucidated every day, and although one cannot say that the newest treatise is the best, yet certainly many older works are greatly set aside by new discoveries. A young student may arrive with much greater ease and certainty at his object, if he is aware which statement in any case is most just, most lucid, or most full upon the point. How much hard

- study might have been saved to many scientific man, if at his first setting out he had bought the right author. Much has the unfortunate wight to unlearn who has been led astray, if it be but by one erroneous principle or even by the indistinct statement of a true one.

The books decidedly most important are those which relate to your specific profession. There can scarcely be any situation or occupation which has not something to be learnt from authors. Those persons who, in your present stage of life, undertake to instruct you, must be very ignorant themselves if they cannot point out to you the specific treatises most suitable, and in the order best adapted to your progress. Put so much confidence in the judgment, as to study well what they may recommend. It may be possible, that the book so placed before you may not be alluring, by its graces of style, or even by cheerfulness of matter; but, be careful how you call that dull, heavy, or uninteresting, which comes recommended as appropriate to your opening progress.

spects in life. Should it even be so in all fair estimate, yet its being suitable ought to overcome reluctance; its being necessary should, if you feel rightly, stimulate to exertion. Action will take off *ennui*; victory will reward the most plodding toil.

Supposing it is scarcely needful to urge you to studies so powerfully recommended, I proceed to state, that, however important specific knowledge may be, there is a sort of general information in its own nature extremely useful, and in the intercourse of life almost necessary; and, as an intermixture with more serious studies, highly beneficial. However the being a lawyer, a farmer, a landlord, &c. may form the distinguishing character of any one, yet the general character of man, of intellectual, should not be forgotten: this cannot be merged in the former, without some considerable loss, both of respectability and of enjoyment. The reasoning powers, if wholly confined to technical subjects, will become cramped, perhaps distorted, as frequently the limbs of a mechanic, by some constrained po-

sition, or awkward exertion: free, open exercise is most conducive to health in all cases. Give full play to the faculties, at least in some degree, it will enable you to return to your stated labours, freshened and alert.

Whatever, therefore, may enlarge your mental powers, will be worth your while to study. One small volume may open to you many views which you could no otherwise obtain; to have had only a glimpse of them is to be many degrees above absolute ignorance. To know that some things exist, is to keep ourselves from many a foolish speech, from many a false judgment, from many a ruinous deception. A new science attained, is almost as a new soul given; it is, at least, as a new sense obtained. Where coughing may cause the blind to see, it is a pity the man should continue in darkness; or be shut out of society by deafness, if any operation may give him hearing. Regard your mind as having many powers and faculties, every one of which deserves to be brought into action; esteem yourself but half a man, while destitute of

knowledge ; any honourable knowledge which comes within your reach.

The works of nature are multifarious, ever new, ever leaving much more to be known. Do not shrink from the contemplation, because the subjects are endless, but determine rather, out of so many, to seize hold on a few. A walk in the country will be made far more interesting by even a slight acquaintance with natural history. The flower, which many pass as a weed, will become a prize, if a little skill in botany enable you to discern its qualities, its beauties, or its scarcity. To have so fair, so large a book as that of nature, presented to us, and we not able to read it, is a state of ignorance, which the energetic mind ought not patiently to bear. Whatever page is open to you, con it well ; but to do this, it will be requisite that you borrow the assistance of some able authors.

There is a knowledge of man too, highly important for every one to obtain. He will be liable to much deception who is ignorant of the common principles by which human

nature is actuated. He will expect more than he ought, and will be disappointed; he will address himself to principles which have generally but feeble influence, and will wonder he does not succeed. Read authors who have seen life, and display it. Travellers show the species in many varieties; history marks the grander movements of the multitude; biography shows you more minutely some single individual. You will from each, and especially from all, gain an insight into the true nature of the world you live in, and the beings with whom you must encounter, either in a friendly or in an adverse manner. To know your company is of great importance to your own proper behaviour, to your comfort, and your safety.

As the mind of man is his prime excellence, emanations of mind are peculiarly valuable. General literature has peculiar charms, and dull must our eye-sight be if we are not more or less fascinated by them. The mind should not only be cultivated, but dressed into neatness: let the rose-bush find a place, as well as

The apple-tree, both must be pruned, and guided, to display themselves in the most elegant; or most productive manner. Facts are the solid treasures of the mind; reasoning assorts, and shapes them into their most useful forms. With a few of them, or with only their mere semblances, will taste, and fancy, and literature, as by magic, conjure up visions delightful, ennobling, highly stimulative to mental energy; which not merely amuse as speculations, but instruct, by bringing into view possibilities, which plain facts have never realized, but which sometimes start into being by the mere circumstance of having had such visionary existence.

I refrain from specifying authors and books, because a just catalogue would be almost endless; because your personal opportunities must regulate your choice, in a great degree; and because if once the principle of always having a book in reading shall appear in its due importance, you will not rest till all that is within your reach is actually obtained.

When I say all that is within your reach, it may perhaps be proper to put in a word of caution. Never suffer yourself to peruse what you perceive to be trash, never debase your mind to ribaldry, never contaminate your principles with infidelity. He who would seduce you to such a conduct, under the notion of trying all parties, and judging for yourself, ought, to be consistent, to recommend you not to account as poison what has been usually so esteemed; but make the trial, how much arsenic you can take without producing death; the experiment is not likely to be made in this shape; were any hardy enough to try, should his life not be the forfeit of his rashness, yet probably his health would ever after feel the injury. Dread the effect then upon the mind, of any thing which the wise, the experienced, tell you may inflame the imagination, or stupify conscience, give a permanent distortion to the judgment, or paralyze the customary exertions of genuine piety. If you are arrived at that point which undervalues the wisdom of age, and sets up the self-conceit of ignorant youth as a better guide, there is little hope of

Self-cultivation effecting much with you. No rules which can be given will appear to you so proper as your own notions. It is in hopes you know yourself better, that I proffer to you my assistance.

There is one mode of instruction, which I cannot but recommend to you. Those periodical works, entitled Reviews, have an especial claim upon you. If you have much time for reading, those will of course gain your attention; and if your opportunities are scanty, some one of them will give you a variety of information, such as no single work of equal size can afford, and in a shape which may make it extremely useful to you. These cast a capacious eye over general literature, present you with something of books whose price may put them quite out of your reach, bring into view sciences after which you would not seek, and will lead you with a gentle hand, but a firm step, to many a topic important, delightful, and highly improving to the opening mind. Instead of invidiously naming any one, I shall only entreat you to confine your-

self to such as give religion fair play; this will narrow your choice much, but don't regret it. Think it better to lose even what may be ably written, if some base principle evidently warps the judgment of the writers: every Review has a specific character; any judicious friend can assist you in the selection.

It would, perhaps, after all, be unfair not to specify one volume, as extremely proper for your age and pursuits. Dr. Johnson says, that Watts's Improvement of the Mind ought to be read over once a year, by every person. Should you make the trial, I am persuaded the result must be beneficial to your character, unless you are extremely deficient towards yourself.

CHAP. IV.

OBSERVATION.

HOWEVER important towards the cultivation of the mind, reading may be ; yet there is a possibility of our being much misled, should we exclusively give up our opinion, or our judgment, to any author. Every man who writes, will, if he is honest, give you his settled notion upon the subject, but this notion may have been formed under some partial light, or some bias of prejudice. What he in sincerity says, may nevertheless be not the truth, but only an approximation towards it. It is your part, to take heed that you be not led astray by any one. And the necessary process for avoiding this evil is, to correct all you read, if possible, by your own observation. A man would judge falsely of many objects were he to look at them with one eye only ; nature has given him two, to render his judgment

more certain. Let the mind use all its eyes if it would not impose upon itself, or be misled by others.

Indeed much may be seen, which no reading can present to the mind. And much must be seen, to be rightly comprehended, as no description can place it in all its points before us. One glimpse of a prospect, will give a more accurate idea of it, than any author can by words. The picturesque description which led the imagination astray, shall be reduced to its true value, by a glance at the reality; or beauties, which no words can paint, shall fasten upon the delighted recollection. Life, like the landscape, is often distorted thus; and the youthful mind is fired, or disgusted, as the case may be, without real cause. The observation actually made, shall in a short time bring things to their true level; a circumstance of vast importance to our proper action in, and towards them.

To an observant mind, many objects for observation present themselves. Persons,

place, actions, sentiments, in infinite variety occur; to let them all pass, without gaining some instruction by them, is a great waste of opportunity. Yet to pore over every one may be quite needless, and may foster the habit of prosing upon every occasion, tiresome to your companions, and useless to yourself. Bring what judgment you have to the selection. It will not always be just to esteem that a trifle, which at first glance seems so: mind may work upon it, till it becomes of great importance. While some things which may seem of consequence, may, when examined, be like the glitter on some minerals, not gold, but tarnish.

If judgment be important, to direct you on what to spend your time and care, it is equally necessary to regulate the mood and manner, in which you regard each individual topic, when selected, To treat a serious subject in a jesting manner, is not the mode most likely to gain a true or useful knowledge of it. To grin when one ought to reason, to joke when deep seriousness is requisite, denotes

not the man, but rather the monkey, or the fool. One cannot expect much improvement from such characters. To examine any thing, under the influence of some opinion already formed and pertinaciously held, is only to confirm one's self in error : while on the other hand, to decline forming an opinion ; to keep the mind in a state of vacillation, when there is a preponderation of argument on any one side, is to render all our toil in observation useless. Especially when we are called upon to act, or are deficient in duty while we needlessly hesitate : then promptitude becomes a virtue, and if not too prompt, it will most commonly be the safest way.

A little observation will show, that some things can only amuse, and that others will in all likelihood instruct. This discovery will enable you to proportion your attention to each. A juggler's tricks may amuse, nay the discovery of the juggle may instruct ; but the mathematician's problem, or the agriculturist's process, will repay attention much better.

It is possible to take a walk of ten miles, and have nothing to report concerning it at the end of the journey. I should much fear for the improvement of one whose eyes could be so careless, whose knowledge was so slight; or whose mind was so vacant as this supposes. Better were it to loiter a little, if loitering were needful; to stop, and contemplate, and watch, and gather; unless speed were absolute duty. Endeavour to gain a habit of observing. Something to observe, will not be wanting to a mind so disposed. Conceive that journey, that company, that machinery, that conversation, lost, which does not give you some new idea; something which may be esteemed worth the recollecting, something which may force you to reason, which may enable you to talk, if suitable opportunity should invite. Something similar may be roused from your memory, something totally different shall be elucidated by the opposition. Some metaphor shall be explained at a glance, or furnished with appropriateness, and facility, when next needed. An anecdote picked up, may guide your own conduct; a hint dropped accidentally, may

add much value to your own stores. The actual fact occurring, will clear away a thousand misapprehensions, or give a true idea, as to what the case may require. What does navigation owe to observing the tides, to reasoning on the unknown property given by the loadstone. What stores indeed of science, wealth, and enjoyment, have been opened by the careful observation of some accidental occurrence.

It may be proper here to caution, the young especially, against refusing to receive a hint; or even allow a fact; which at first glance seems to be different from the notions already imbibed. The pride which conceives it already knows, does not sit well on any, and certainly appears very awkward on the young. If suffered to operate, it will shut the window against the light of day, and prefer the lamp. Should the hint obtruded seem even to be condemnatory of past practice, or of present system, do not on that account refuse to examine it thoroughly. There can be no danger in finding out the truth; it is at all times better than error. The only danger in the case sup-

posed is the too easily, too suddenly, giving up one notion for another ; often merely because it is newer, or because it has not been sufficiently examined. . This is not to gain the habit of observation, but to pervert, and soon to lose it. We should never part with our notions, or our money, unless we obtain something better by the exchange.

CHAP. V.

ON THINKING.

THINKING, not growth, makes manhood. There are some, who, though they have done growing, are still only boys. The constitution may be fixed, when the judgment is immature; the limbs may be strong, while the reasoning is feeble. Many who can run, and jump, and bear any fatigue, cannot observe, cannot examine, cannot reason or judge, contrive, or execute—they do not think.

Accustom yourself then to thinking. Set yourself to understand whatever you see or read. To run through a book is not a difficult task, nor is it a very profitable one. To understand a few pages only, is far better than to read the whole, where mere reading it is all. If the work does not set you to thinking, either you or the author must be very deficient.

Great stores of knowledge are in some cases accumulated, without making the man wise; because, though he has read, and remembers, he has never duly considered. It is most conducive to health to let one meal digest, before we take another: it might be equally beneficial not to take up another book, perhaps not to pass to another page, till we have by reflection securely made that our own which we have just been reading.

To join thinking with reading, is one of the first maxims, and one of the easiest operations. There is something to work upon; the mind has only to shape, to square, to polish it, which may be done with comparative ease.

But he is not to be called a thinking man, who reasons only while he reads; whose mind is vacant, unless some one else fill it. Be not content, therefore, to think merely as some author, or some circumstance may bid you, but try to think from yourself. Let loose your cogitations, I might say, perhaps with more propriety, watch them, train them, and keep


them from running wild and useless. Mind is of necessity ever active : at no waking moment, at least, is it destitute of ideas. The art of thinking, is not always that of creating, but of marshalling the thoughts, which else wander in a desultory, and therefore an ineffective, useless manner. To sit five minutes utterly vacant, is, I believe, not easy, even to minds the most absent. But to mark the various fancies which flit across the imagination, though a duty, a pleasure of high degree, is what we often neglect. To cure this negligence is the object of this chapter. Be not indolent, be not careless. Watch your own thoughts, it will teach you the art of thinking. Accustom yourself to set them each to their proper service.

You will have more work done, and better. Mind can work upon itself, and never to better purpose : all it knows from other sources, will by this means become profitable, it is sowing the grain, not merely grinding it : and the produce will be accordingly abundant.

It is only by thinking, that a man can know himself. Yet all other knowledge, without this, is splendid ignorance. Not a glance merely, but much close examination will be requisite, for the forming a true opinion of your own powers. Ignorance and self-conceit always tend to make you over-rate your personal ability; as a slight degree of knowledge may make a timid mind pass upon himself too humble a judgment. It is only by thinking, and much impartial observation, that a man can discover his real disposition. A hasty temper only supposes itself properly alive; an indolent indulger imagines he is as active as any one; till by close, and severe examination, each may discover something nearer the truth. So important as such discoveries are, do not grudge the necessary, the appropriate process, on which this self-knowledge depends.

What are your prospects in life? have you any plan, any expectations, any apprehensions? By thinking these over, you may forestall obstacles, and avoid them; may beware of opportunities, and secure them.

acts with increasing facility, precision, and extent, under all its privations. Where there is no privation, but every help from former thinkers, how much may we not expect from it. Thus great characters rise. While he who thinks little, though much he reads, or much he sees, can hardly call any thing he has his own. He trades with borrowed capital, and is in the high road to literary, or mental bankruptcy.



CHAP. VI.

THE PRIVATE STUDY.

It happens in many cases, that a very trifle has great influence. Would it be sound philosophy, to call that a trifle any longer. The subject of this chapter, may at first sight appear to be of that unimportant character : but from experience I regard it as having considerable influence, and as being therefore well worthy of attention.

My advice then is to every young person, secure some place, however small, which you may call your study. I have known a separation made in the corner of a room, by a few sheets of brown paper hung as curtains from top to bottom, answer the end quite well.

The object of this sacred inclosure is retirement. He that has no where to be alone,

will scarcely be able to think, will hardly pursue any distinct plan of reading; he must take his chance in the bustle of a family, and be at the mercy of accidents, dunces, and purposed interruptions.

If the place of your abode permit any closet to be thus appropriated, esteem yourself extremely happy.

Surely your situation must be singularly unhappy, if it does not afford you opportunity in the corner of your bed-room, a place for a watch-box; in the remoteness of a garret, some uninterrupted spot suitable for the purpose of seclusion. A small spot will do, perhaps better than a large room; as it is more snug (and snug is a comfortable word), and as it will be more easily fitted up, and furnished.

When you have secured this accommodation, need it have a name, does it signify what name it has? yes, all the world through, names have great effect; call it then your **STUDY**. The very calling it so, will tend to

secure this for the use you put it to. The soldier's uniform helps him to fight, trains him to it: the judge's wig and robes give him gravity. The daily visit to the study, will, in like manner, tend to make you studious.

When you have thus insulated yourself, all is not done which is worth recommending. Bare walls are not very inviting; paper it. Do this yourself, it will interest you the more, by all the labour you bestow upon it. You must be a poor carpenter, if you cannot put up in it a few shelves; and a poor creature indeed, if you don't like them the better for being of your own contrivance, execution, and ornamenting. Come, bring in all the books you have: those you brought from school will stand very still, and be quite inoffensive, and if not very bad in the binding, will fill up at least. Those gained as prizes, will of course have the best situation, where the light comes full upon them. Those presented to you by your parents or friends, are handsome, and will ornament the shelves to advantage. If you have any which you have purchased

yourself, bring them and if you have no you will perhaps soon see, or hear of something, which comes within your reach, at which will fill up that unsightly gap, and keep the other volumes from falling about. A study without books, is laughable: but see, with them, though there is not half you intend to have, yet it already seems something. You enter it with a smile of complacency on your face, and begin already to feel its attractive influence.

To a study, unquestionably belong pen, ink, and paper. How can you put down else any thing which might occur to you, or even make a memorandum, of what books you read or of what money you lay out. A neat writing desk would be a treasure; ask your father just to peep in, and see if it does not want something. A folio to keep your drawings in, if it were only to hide them, would be of use. And if you have one or two, rather better than common, and can procure a frame or two to put them in, they may hang up without offending any body; for who sees them but

yourself: unless indeed your mother, or sisters, should be curious; but you are not afraid they will censure;—nay it is most likely they will add something: a book, a small glass, or a neat curtain; every thing helps.

It will be strange, if, when thus furnished, you do not now and then steal into it, if it be only to see if all there is safe, and in order. I will allow you when there, to do nothing but look at it, first at this side, then at that; but as this will after awhile become wearisome, it will be easy, and quite natural, to take down one of the books, and look into it: if that does not excite an interest, put it up again, and take down another. Your assortment must be very badly chosen, if you do not find something which pleases, which engages your attention, which you put down with regret, when duty calls you away, and to which you return with glee, that you may at least finish that chapter.

The habit of reading it is almost impos-

sible to indulge, in the crowd and buzz of family. Having a place to read in, will go some way towards tempting you to it, if you have not yet felt its pleasures ; and towards rendering it easy, if your taste leads you that way. All the importance therefore which attaches to reading, pleads in behalf of a private study.

Nay, should you wish to talk with yourself awhile, now you will have an excellent opportunity. There is no thinking while several people are talking in the same room ; but when alone it almost comes naturally ; at least if your author puzzles you, you can at your leisure con him over, till you perceive his meaning ; if your own mind labours, you can sit and muse, till you examine your sorrows or your joy, till you shape your vague ideas and pen it down by appropriate words ; so that you can look at it on all sides, and judge whether it be just, or fallacious. All the importance which attaches to thinking, therefore serves to recommend a private study, so convenient to think in.

If such processes as these take place in it, the utility of a private study, the beneficial influence it may have upon your mental improvement, cannot be doubted. The want of opportunity keeps many an energetic character from action; becomes an unanswerable objection to one of weaker tone: half the hinderances to self-improvement will be done away by this single expedient, the opportunity must more or less invite, stimulate, assist.

Indeed solitude as such is friendly to the mind: as the silence, the repose of night, refreshes for another day's exertion. Retirement gives repose to the mental faculties; or if it lead to action, it is an activity so different in its nature, as to be in reality a relief. "I hate to be alone," is the outcry not of a strong, but of a feeble mind; of one which has no resources in itself, but is obliged, like a mendicant, to lie idle till some one goes by; to continue empty, till a mite be cast by charity or scorn. Build yourself a study, and escape from a state so disgraceful. Solitude will soon

CHAP. VII.

CHOICE OF SITUATION.

IF the teens is the time of life wherein the character is principally formed, it is easy to see, that the situation in which a youth is placed at that season must have considerable influence in the formation of it, let it be either to good, or to evil. The situation is allowed to have great influence on the future prosperity, in opening or closing advantageous prospects and sometimes very great sums are given to procure an opportunity, supposed to be efficient in obtaining wealth. Whatever efficiency it may have as to your general prosperity, it will have undoubtedly much influence on your character, and by that means, indeed, will most of the expected influence on prosperity be effected.

Many persons may be said to have derived

all their worth, their knowledge, their principles, as well as their opportunities for exerting themselves, from some happy circumstance leading them into the very situation calculated to advance their interests, and facilitate the attainment of their wishes. On the other hand, many may look back with regret on the connexions so formed, on the pestiferous principles so imbibed, on the evil habits then and there learned, and indulged, by which their after-life was injured, or their absolute ruin induced.

This circumstance should indeed be the anxious care of your parents ; imperfectly do they fulfil their duties towards you, if they are negligent in selecting a wholesome spot, or permit your continuance when they discern any baleful influence likely to prevail. The world indeed, in every place, is full of temptations ; youth will be assailed with evil advisers, examples, and opportunities, in every situation : but there are some more likely to abound in snares, than others are ; and this should by no means be reckoned as a secondary considera-

tion, by any one desirous that a good character should be formed.

I knew a case of a young lad, religiously brought up, sent from a country town to London, to a fine situation for business. When he had been there but a week or two, he wrote home, to beg they would remove him, for the temptations by which he found himself surrounded were such, as he was sure it would be impossible long to resist. Was it his parents who were deaf to his remonstrances! He was bound; and in a few years, before his term expired, he died, laden with iniquities, a prey to disease. I envy not the feelings of those who recollect all the circumstances of the case, and who must know, that they sacrificed their child's welfare, life, and soul, to business! Destructive idol! the Moloch of our commercial nation.

However the selection of your situation may belong to older and wiser persons, yet does it by no means rest on them exclusively. The prudence of age is often counteracted by the

self-will of youth, in this very particular. Be on your guard, therefore : weigh well all the circumstances of the case, and be aware especially, that your future character is staked upon this choice.

The usual bait in such a case is brilliance. The house that dashes into a great business is very tempting. A situation that seems to make a lad a gentleman at once, is suited to the inexperience of his age. Parents, perhaps, see that there is more show than solidity, that it will lead to expenses now beyond their means ; or require, by and by, exertions, ruinous to themselves, if made fully, and to you if made by halves. Hear them, if they reason thus ; and especially pay attention, should they fear for the temptations which that specific connexion may offer. Do not let self-conceit be heard when he warrants that you will be able to stand where so many have fallen. Suffer not your whole account to consist of pounds and guineas, though they should amount to thousands ; but add, in a side column at least, virtues and vices ; principles lost ;

restiferous maxims infused; character sinking as wealth rises; possible eminence, bought and paid for by so much conscience absolutely parted with, either by dribblets or in one lump. Religion chased from the inner temple of the heart, that Mammon might rule without a rival or a check. Destructive prosperity this, and splendid ruin, at best.

The shores of India have echoed with the groans of many a too-late repentance. The hat and feathers, and the gay uniform, cannot prevent the bitter recollection of peaceful pleasures lost for ever. The citizen's splendid villa in vain is expected to revive a rural taste, which has been vitiated beyond recovery. The rolling chariot has carried to court the consciousness of villainy, which sliced a large discount off the emolument, and twined like an unseen serpent, within the glittering coronet. Do not envy misery; do not covet remorse; do not lay traps for your own peace of mind. Those who will be rich pierce themselves through with many sorrows.

An honest, an honourable occupation, being first regarded, inquire if it be suitable to your talents and natural disposition. Do not, on this point, listen to indolence, pride, or self-will, but to cool judgment. Should the employment require activity, and your turn is for studiousness; or the contrary, you will have to fight against yourself; there had need be cogent reasons for such a contest. That situation which will give appropriate opportunity for the exertion of your talents, may be expected to yield the full produce of those talents. If they are not thwarted, or cramped, but fostered, indulged, and perfected, you have then the fairest chance that you individually can have for usefulness, comfort, and success.

Regard all situations as opportunities for exertion. Do not expect to find fame or wealth ready made. The most that any station in life can give you, is an occasion for an honourable display of what you are, and what you can do. Choose, therefore, one in which these points may appear to advantage and then fill it in all its duties; with care.

faithfulness, and energy. There is scarcely any line of life but may afford you honour and competence, on these terms.

Should it happen, that adherence to these principles should even place you a little lower in life than might possibly, by other means, have been attained, yet remember, a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of things which he possesses. Happiness, so far as such circumstances affect it, is best secured by internal peace of conscience, and external employment to the full of our powers. Both these are needful; where they meet, the situation was indeed happily chosen, and if circumstances rather than your own wishes placed you in it, you have occasion to be very thankful to the wisdom of friends, or rather to the kindness of an over-ruling Providence. Now be true to yourself, and all will be well.

CHAP. VIII.

RELATIVE DUTIES.

CHARACTER consists of many points. In a commercial sense, the term *good man* has a very confined meaning. When it is extended from the purse to the head, then talents are included, which is quite proper: but the true, the best interests of the individual require, that the heart be principally considered—then virtues will be attended to; then will talents be rightly directed; then will wealth, if it come, be advantageously employed; or mere competency be made productive of enjoyments beyond the power of wealth to purchase, or talents to attain.

The first lessons which tend to bring the heart under proper influence are learned at home. They begin indeed in our earliest infancy, and are but imperfectly learned by such

as unhappily are driven from home in younger life. That fostering power, which has our good in view by every natural state and propensity, has placed the babe in a situation to feel early. 'Tis on his mother's bosom he learns his first lessons; from her smile he catches the glow of affection, and by her frown, or her gentle sigh, is he persuaded to give up what his ignorance, or selfishness, prompt him with pertinacity to retain. Happy where this sweet, this powerful influence is well directed; where the mother's judgment guides her affectionate feelings, and teaches her, for her child's sake, to disappoint him, to accustom him to deny himself, and to act on principle, even when the only principle he can comprehend is, "don't make mamma cry."

If the custom of sending out children to wet-nurse and to boarding schools had no other evil in it, prudence would teach us to avoid it, where possible, lest the natural connexion between parents and children should be in any degree broken; lest the connexion should rest, like loose stones piled on each

other, every moment in danger of falling for want of cement; for want of that exquisite tenderness of feeling, which the frequent recurrence of mutual good offices cannot fail to induce. Being told—this is your father, that is your mother, must have very small effect on one who had never seen them before; and who would, in that case, look at them with a scrutiny very threatening to rising affections, very different from those joyous sensations which swell the bosom of a kindly youth, brought up in intimate association with those earliest, best of friends. Then love need not be taught, it is felt; it need not be planted, but only fostered; lest (as all delicate plants) it be in danger from external injury.

Where there are brothers and sisters, the opportunity for bringing the heart's feelings into play, and for regulating all their motions, is rendered much more complete. Selfishness, that grand bane of character, must be checked greatly among so many competitors; and those too, dearly beloved. The kindly feelings will be drawn out in various ways, and thereby

more fully, more evenly expanded. That love which unites the child to its parents is put into another sort of action, when it embraces a brother or a sister; when it yields to an elder, as most proper, or to a younger, as most kind. Happy pliability, when it is regulated by right principles. The youth is much better fitted to enter the world, inimical as that world will often be found to such honourable feelings.

In vain will a youth console himself with the hope of having a good character abroad, if he be conscious of behaving ill to those at home. Real goodness is never partial in its operations; but like oil poured on the tumultuous waves, spreads every where, diffusing its calming influence to all within its reach. The churlish brother may curb his moroseness when in company, and may flatter himself that he can, if he pleases, make himself agreeable; not perceiving how doubly guilty he thus marks himself to be, at those seasons when it does not please him to be sociable, or even bearable. Nor let him imagine, that the guise

of good nature put on abroad, will ever appear as if it were real to any but persons as young and as ignorant as himself; nay, that garb which is not commonly worn, will never be easy. He will betray himself, inevitably, by some hasty word, or overbearing argument. There is no hope that a hypocrite (and such he is) will be long undiscovered; nor is it right that he should escape detection when he aims to deceive. The only way to be respected and beloved abroad, is to conduct yourself so as will ensure respect and affection at home. The easiest way to seem any thing is to be it. Then will it come without laborious effort, and continue without incessant watchfulness, and be in all situations the same.

Ask your own heart then, if you make conscience of your behaviour towards relatives so near, so invaluable. If any misgiving arises do not call pride, or petulance, to check the rising feeling, but examine all that you suspect, and rectify all that you find amiss. An reluctance to this first step towards improve-

ment will augur ill as to the issue. Do not deceive yourself with the intention of taking more care abroad, and making that suffice instead of altering your conduct, and thereby confessing error, at home. This very confession will be useful to you ; the alteration consequent will be more easily made, and most certainly will be affectionately accepted. And then, should parents, brothers, sisters, begin to speak well (and the full heart will love thus to vent itself), with what advantage will all your renewed endeavours abroad appear. The work of establishing a character then becomes easy ; you get hold of it by the right end.

Home is the grand nursery for virtues, and admirably adapted for the purpose ; it lays hold of the heart while it is yet unsophisticated, and has only its common depravity to struggle against, not fixed, rooted, warped yet by habit, bad company, or false notions. If parents are judicious and faithful, here, much may be done.

To love home, is one of the first of virtues first in point of time, and of importance too, as it is the parent of all the rest. The sweet charities which bind man to man, which ornament, and enrich, social life ; which in value, as regarding happiness, are far beyond wealth or talent ; these all germinate from the nursery, are fostered amid the domestic circle ; and only there can be reared to maturity, firmness, or beauty. Virtues engrafted afterwards, by artificial heat and culture, seldom have the freshness, nor the healthy appearance, nor the fruitfulness of those generated at home. Here the child learns, before learning is felt as a lesson ; learns to love, in itself the most delightful of all sensations ; is allured to play its own part at benevolence, by smiles which vibrate every nerve of sensibility ; begins to bestow, when it has nothing to give but affection ; to confer favours, though itself feeble, ignorant, and dependent.

Have you a father, thank God. Many have been deprived, even in infancy, of such a pro-

tector, guide, and friend. You expect much from him; you are right, his relationship warrants it; you have received much already, now be grateful. Duties are always reciprocal. It were unjust to expect all, and yield nothing. He that planted, grafted, pruned, the tree, may naturally look to enjoy the fruit. Now a wise son maketh a glad father. Yield him this revenue of internal joy; let him see that his care and cost have not been expended on an unproductive soil.

There are terms, which however just and appropriate, excite alarm in some minds. Will it rouse any unpleasant feeling in you to say that your obedience is his indisputable right? Do not answer—"yes, I cannot get off this." If you wish to avoid obedience, there must be something wrong; see that it is not in yourself. 'Tis possible a father may require too much; it is much more likely that a child should yield too little.

Can it be possible that you treat him with disrespect? Nay, ask your heart closely, do

you actually esteem him. It is strange that there should ever be occasion for such an inquiry, ever be a possibility of a negative answer. Happy for you, for your forming character, if the suggestion rouses your indignation; if your ready, "yes, certainly, and well I may," shall put the matter out of doubt. Recollect, however, that respect does not consist in bows and cringes, in titles of honour, or even in ready obedience. Wherever it exists, it will spread itself through every ramification of conduct and of feeling. The want of it is often discoverable in a pert answer, when no disobedience marks it. Something done, or said, out of his presence, will shew the real state of feeling towards him better than any thing which takes place under his eye; some trifle, too small for common notice, better than matters more important.

Without esteem, obedience will be very partial, and what of it does exist will be destitute of proper principle. Cultivate, therefore, a feeling which has so important an influence with the greatest care. I will not forestall from

you any suggestion against your father as unworthy of esteem. I know he is not perfect ; but I conceive you are the last person who ought to proclaim his imperfections : at any rate, do not be hasty in pronouncing sentence ; stay till you arrive at his years, have had his exercises, have become yourself a parent, before you condemn. Then if you see it just, and think it worth while, or feel it necessary, speak ; but not now. Take all that is excellent in his character into account, recollect that what appears an impropriety in him may perhaps have good reason ; and if you find any thing which cannot be justified, cast over it the best excuse you can ; affection will assist you in weaving a mantle, large and close in its texture, sufficient for any occasion.

Happy will it be for you, if you regard your father as a friend. I shall think better of you both, if you are in the habit of consulting him in all your concerns ; if you approve yourself the better for having his approbation, and find no inclination to hide your proceedings from him. Hide is a bad word when it enters a

family ; mutual confidence, unanimity, sympathy, and a train of amiable sisters, leave them dwelling ; they sicken at concealment, they hate duplicity ; they tremble whenever they discover a separate interest, a self-willed judgment, or even a solitary process going on. Always suspect yourself, your object, your means, or your motive, whenever you feel an inclination to keep your father ignorant of any circumstance that arises, of any project you have in view, of any companion to whom you begin to feel attachment : tell him, if you want to judge for yourself. Your readiness to consult him is almost a complete justification of the propriety of your conduct. Be open ; I will engage this will open him. Should he not at first feel the influence of a conduct towards him so unexpected, yet will it in time avail much to your advantage.

His being always melancholy, as you term it, is perhaps only anxiety ; for many are the concerns which lie upon his mind. Treat this anxiety with respectful consideration. Should you maintain an open behaviour towards him,

he will perhaps communicate with you upon what distresses him. You will by that means obtain an enviable opportunity of alleviating his sorrows. Effective will be the soothing of an affectionate child; nay, as your knowledge increases, as your reason ripens, you may be able to point out a circumstance which his anxiety did not see, to suggest a hint, which his wisdom may improve, to his great advantage; or to remove by activity some obstacle, which his feebleness found difficult, if not insurmountable. To have a friend in your father is honourable to you; for him to have a friend in his son, redounds to your honour doubly.

Especially let integrity never be broken in upon, because he is your father. There are, who scarcely feel guilty of purloining when what they take is their father's. It may be the matter is a trifle, but you must be on bad terms with your father if you cannot ask a trifle of him. Remember too, that such depredations discovered (and they cannot be hid long), will weaken all your father's confidence.

in you. What can you call gain, which is obtained by the loss of his good opinion?

Every deviation from integrity should be guarded against, and accounted as inexcusable on any principle; because one deviation leads to another. When plain downright honesty is disregarded, finesse comes in the place of it: this may endure for awhile; but all this while the moral character is becoming deteriorated in perhaps an imperceptible, but in a real and alarming degree. Vice in any shape is to be dreaded. Never stain your character with a single instance. Never, no never! The only way to keep out grosser iniquities is not to suffer smaller ones. The only way assuredly to avoid continuing in evil is never to let it begin.

Such feelings will bring you often, and by choice, into your father's company; prize it, it will give you an elevation of character. It will make you aim to be worthy of his friendship. You will attain your object—for heartily to aim at it is half the matter. By degrees

will feel the value of such a son. Every thing he may in consequence devolve upon you, to you a gain, and will give you opportunity to become adroit in matters which else would not be entrusted to your age. Half the honours of his station will then become yours, without your robbing him. Much of his knowledge will you imbibe, and the companionship with lads of like age, who consort only with their equals in years, will, if you have any talent, any feeling, be greatly to your advantage.

No longer, therefore, account it manly to rebel against your father's commands, to suspect his judgment, or to turn his manners to ridicule; these, or any one of them, mark you as gone from all that proper feeling, or venerable principle, which promise respectability of character; and you have much to learn, if you do not know this; much to unlearn, if you have habituated yourself to behave thus. Reflect yourself, it cannot be that you are wiser than he; it cannot be that he deserves punishment at your hands, it cannot be that

ingratitude can be a virtue, or such ingratitude do you honour. I have no hope of you if you hesitate here. The return to proper behaviour may be difficult, but it is indispensable.

Your mother; is it possible that you despise her; reared as you are by her care, fed as you once was at her breast? Her relationship demands your tenderest affection; by what logic can this be made to warrant contumely? What perversion of mind that can defend ill treatment here; what baseness of heart that can offer it? If, indeed, it is only thoughtlessness, or the influence of silly company, which has occasioned it, the sooner you begin to think, the better; the sooner you forsake such depraved company, the more likely for you to escape the pestiferous contagion. Let the effort be made, or all is lost; recollect by how many ties you are bound; see, feel, how tenderly sensitive they are; at least on her part. They must have twined around your own heart, more or less; suffer the genial influence again to prevail; 'tis vital influence, and healthful.

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with your mother may become weaker,
the same cause. Let it therefore be the
er guarded ; make it a matter of principle,
will then feel its importance, and bear it
in mind.

Do not permit yourself, then, to fail in po-
nd affectionate attention to her : occasions
rise continually ; every time you meet will
cerning eye perceive in what manner you
nd her ; you would be sorry that any one
watched you should discover a want of
l breeding in you, in any instance—say

especially in this. Now, depend upon it, that your mother's is a discerning eye; her feelings aid her perceptions, her watchfulness is ever on the alert. As her son's attentions are peculiarly precious to her, so any failure in the respect due, must come with a poignancy upon her feelings neither slight nor easily healed. But you care not what she thinks ! poor, silly lad ! for whom then do you care ? If this first principle of nature can be broken through by you, what security can we have for any other ? Talk not of honour, of growing age, of increasing intellect ; let them appear here, where first of all they ought to show themselves. We shall not give him credit for many virtues, who errs in his first instance ; and pierces through with anguish that bosom on which his infant head used to repose, and repays with slight her incessant watchings for his welfare ; who grudges a little trouble to accommodate that very person, who wore out her health and strength to rear him to his present ability for ingratitude.

You must be very incapable of forming a

judgment concerning character, if you cannot see any thing in all this to esteem. The female mind may differ from that of man; her occupations, her disadvantages, may, in some cases, place her lower than man. Were she to be a man, this were something to be considered, to be objected to; but as her lot is to be a woman, these very differences are to her advantage. Society is benefitted by the variation. If you do not perceive this, suspect the fault to be in your own judgment, rather than suffer your mother to fail in your esteem. True, she is anxious and fearful, and often foreboding evil. Do you give her no cause? yet recollect that very sensibility qualifies her to rear the young, to nurse the sick, to watch over the varied the minute concerns of a family. A differently-constituted mind would have let your sickly self die; would have crushed your puny frame; would have suffered ten thousand accidents to have befallen your very robustness; were there no nurses but men, how few children would be reared, and what bears would they all have been. Honour your father for his specific

virtues and excellencies, and honour your mother for her very different, but equally important qualities.

Much of the honour, the affectionate regard due, will consist in the respectful mode of your communications with her. The tone of voice which some sons use towards their mother, sons who would be thought gentlemen too, betrays a want of feeling extremely reprehensible. The vacancy of countenance which shows itself completely uninterested, although apparently listening; the tart reply; the superciliousness which disdains an explanation, are all so many daggers in the breast of a fond mother. A little, a very little complaisance, such as would instantly appear were any other lady to take part in the conversation would give a delight of no small value to her too sensible, her aching heart. Would it be savage to give a parent husks while the kernels are dealt out to others? yet this is often the case as to the good offices of conversation, and the little nameless, but important amenities of social intercourse.

It is also too common to suppose, or to act as if it were laid down as a principle, that a mother's advice is of necessity absurd. That inconsiderate youth is not aware of many dangers which experience has pointed out, might pass for an axiom. A contempt of it often brings its own punishment, by some accident incurred, or some grievous sickness, which might have been avoided by a little commonly polite attention to the voice of age, the warning of affectionate carefulness. When the advice relates to more important objects (though health is no trifle), the habit of despising an old woman's counsel may engender disregard as a matter of course. It is, however, always folly to despise wisdom, let it come from whose lips it may; and the folly, however common, is deepened in its depravity, when wisdom is despised, merely because a mother utters it.

Growing years bring growing infirmities; these seem naturally to call for commiseration and additional tenderness. If you can feel this a burden, I am sorry for you. I fear for your actual disposition; it must grow up de-

praved in its character, unfavourable to your own happiness in life, and it threatens much suffering to yourself, whenever infirmities shall come upon you. Will not the reaction of providence bring, in the unkind treatment of you by your own children, the bitter recollection of your former behaviour to the age and infirmities of an honourable, but, by you, dishonoured mother? If affection and good principles do not weigh with you to rectify your conduct, let fear operate. Your behaviour betokens great selfishness; let that same selfishness make you afraid of provoking retaliation from Him who has said, "The eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it."

Have you brothers, or sisters; you have then other circumstances very influential in the formation of your character; favourable in a high degree, if you are wise, if you are faithful to yourself; and capable, on the other hand, of developing the baseness of a selfish heart, if yours should unhappily be of that description.

Where can the principles of justice and of mutual rights be better learned, than among the brothers of a family? A thousand cases occur daily which give opportunity for oppression, and which also show its baseness. Well if the affection usually prevalent among such near relatives shall come in to balance between power and right; to teach justice and principle, by the best feelings; where knowledge is very limited, and while the power to do mischief scarcely rises to actual injury, even though the will desires it.

The world is but one family of brothers. Well would it be, if this, as a principle, were to regulate our social proceedings. Happy is it for that man in whom the sentiment is intermingled with his knowledge, his motives, and his aims. In what manner can this intermixture be effected with more certainty, or to better effect, than in a family? To love all around us there seems easy, seems natural. The habit well formed, when taken into life will have beneficial effects. Improve then your enviable opportunity; give full play to the

benevolence of your disposition; learn to be patient, forgiving, generous, considerate, sympathetic. Every circumstance is now favourable to your improvement in these points; seize the advantageous moments.

Many a little partnership will take place between your brothers and yourself. Whether the object be amusement, interest, or assistance, it will give opportunity for displaying many virtues, for repressing many vicious propensities. You will see, perhaps feel, the evil of wrong conduct; learn to avoid it. Many a pleasurable sensation will arise from a kind action done, a small, but acceptable service rendered; you hereby obtain a key to a certain source of many pleasures in after life, never let it get rusty; for your own happiness' sake, confer happiness on others. Train your mind to the requisite self-command, by the assistance of that indescribable, but powerful feeling, which we call brotherly love.

Sensation of a finer quality may be cultivated, if sisters also claim your gallant and

tender attentions. 'Tis indeed disgusting, when we see a lad obtrusively attentive to every female in company, except those whose claims upon him are so strong, so delicate. Suspect yourself of some silly feeling, or some base motive, if you find this to be the case.

Nourish affection in a quarter where every sexual feeling excites it, where every natural principle restrains it within due bounds. Home is the proper province for the female character, there it is developed, there it shines. You must, therefore, have much greater opportunity of discerning what is amiable and interesting in your sisters than in others. Much more easily can you form an estimate of their character, talents, and virtues, than you can of any whom you only see now and then ; on a visit, when every thing, tempers as well as dress, is chosen with care, put on for the occasion, and perhaps put off again when the occasion is over. Many little tender attentions do you receive from sisters ; for the female heart is made full of kindness, and to a

brother it lawfully overflows in its tenderest regards. Have you no feelings to be wrought upon by good offices, or are you proud enough to think yourself, as a male, to have a right to their most obsequious services, and a right too, to be ungrateful for them ?

Should pride of intellect, of knowledge, haunt your imagination, let it have vent to some useful purpose, in giving needed instruction. A sister, a younger sister especially, will be glad to be taught by an affectionate brother. There are many things which they are not usually taught, which may nevertheless be well worth their learning. Shape your knowledge down to their comprehension, you will exalt your sister's mind, and your own character at the same time, by such a proceeding. To laugh at her for ignorance, when it is on a topic she has not been taught, is cruel. To instruct her in the requisite principle, to inform her accurately concerning the fact in debate, will much better become you, and will show your superiority to greater advantage.

Should your situation at this time of life remove you from the immediate circle, even that circumstance may be made favourable to the grand point. Absence will keep you clear from the little jealousies, and bickerings, which may possibly arise, and agitate such as live in constant intimacy. You will forget your own quarrels, if, when at home, you were so unfortunate as to have any. Your visits now will, with tolerable care, always occasion a smile of welcome. Your presence shall be longed for, your absence regretted; favourable circumstances these for your assuming a respectable style of behaviour. Were anything improper in your conduct when at home, you can now drop it; a little observation will show you how to make yourself always welcome, and a little prudence will incline you to adopt the necessary caution. Become respectable at home, and I promise you a good reception abroad. Make yourself beloved by your immediate connexions, and the same feelings, the same principles, will ensure you esteem wherever you go.

Suffer, then, the better feelings to expand towards sisters and brothers ; it will be mutually beneficial. If you have such relatives, fill up your relative duties. Be a brother ; there is something honourable in the title ; it presents a thousand occasions of behaving well ; to behave ill on those occasions is perverse, indeed, and cannot be to your honour or advantage. Redeem your character, if you have lost it ; be chary of it, if in any danger ; and if you excel already, maintain your honourable station. 'Tis mean to despise such ties, 'tis base to break through them. Providence has mercifully given them, to train the heart in the sweetest manner to proper feeling, to accustom it to delightful and pure sensations. The season of youth is favourable to this sort of self-cultivation ; you will be strangely wanting to yourself should you neglect the opportunity.

When the benefit of your own character is in view, we may descend a little lower. If your notions are right, and your feelings well

regulated, your servants (I mean your father's domestics) will be the better for it. Can you rate them well, when they do not minister to your pleasure? can you storm, if they fail in punctuality? So much the worse for you. You have then another important lesson to learn. It is most likely that you think this manly; silly people always deceive themselves thus. It is taking up manliness quite by the wrong end. Manliness is superiority and power certainly; but it is power gained by superiority of character, not of vociferation; won by gentleness, propriety, usefulness; rather than inherited by family, purchased by wealth, or gained by station. Do not expose yourself by hauteur to those, who, though servants, are older than yourself; able to do what you cannot; persons upon whom, I strongly suspect, you are more dependent than you would like to own; and without whose good offices, the little gentleman would be very helpless.

CHAP. IX.

COMPANY.

It is neither possible nor proper that a young person should confine himself to the individuals which compose his domestic circle. As he grows up, he is forced to mingle in other societies. As the influence of such intermingling must be great, it is of proportionate importance that it be well regulated.

The known effect of association is assimilation. We grow, perhaps insensibly, but actually, like to those in whose company we are often found. If this sociability arises from choice, it proves that we already resemble them; and the progress of conformity will be so much the more rapid. In many cases, mixtures become chemically united, and can hardly, by any process, be separated again; in others, where mixture does not take place, as in oil

and water, yet a foulness ensues, and both are spoiled as to their specific uses. It is, in some degree, similar with the mind, and, in a much greater, with the manners. Very strong principles are requisite to counteract such influence. Youth, by the mere circumstance of youth, have not yet their principles strongly fixed, nor are they able to make resistance ; especially against any thing which shall wear a pleasing appearance.

There is a pliability in the young mind, as in the young twig ; which renders it apt to take any shape into which circumstances may press it. It is of great consequence, therefore, not to let it shoot awry ; nay, to train, and gently to bind it, in the best attainable direction. To suppose you can associate with such as are acknowledged to be wicked, and suffer no injury, is to show great ignorance of human nature, and of the usual effects which follow certain causes.

When the temper is not peculiarly pliable, yet the influence of example is great. To see

knowledge of what is right; direction, or stimulus, which may assist you to attain it.

The choice of company is the more important, because company of some sort must be had. Absolute solitariness is unnatural to man; any thing approaching to it is unfavourable to youth. The hermit's life is as hurtful, as it is uncongenial to youth. However useful loneliness may be, too much of that (as of every good thing) may do harm. The temper most commonly fails in him who has not the usual occasions for its restraint or exertion. The manners are, to a proverb, deteriorated by it. He who seldom mingles in company does not know how to behave when in it; and the consciousness of this embarrasses him the more. The health even may be greatly improved by such unbending. Nothing is more hurtful scarcely than solitary confinement. Where commerce imposes the same restraint, and keeps at a dark desk for tedious hours and days and years, without change, the effect is often dreadful. In such cases the hilarity which the social circle gives is absolutely need-

ful. This ought to be carefully provided by those who watch over youth, lest unguardedly they provide for themselves something which may not be quite so innocent, nay, may be as dangerous to their very health, as that solitariness from which they would escape.

If some society will be sought, and must be, the importance of well ascertaining what its nature is, and what its effects may be, cannot be denied. Your own judgment is scarcely to be trusted, in a case where much experience is needful, to a right decision. Give not up yourself too suddenly to any new, and especially to any fascinating scenes. If you do not well know the character of the parties, abstain till inquiry shall set you at ease. Their being very delightful, or very much frequented, or very fashionable, ought so much the more to put you on your guard.

It happens, sometimes, that a dissipated companion shows his depravity at first glance. The rattle of one sort of serpent serves to give alarm, and put the otherwise unwary on their

guard. Now this is well. A youth must be dull indeed who cannot tell an openly wicked man. A single oath betrays him ; one proposal to break the Lord's day, in a party of pleasure, evinces, beyond all sophistry, that religion is unknown ; and if so, the consequence is easily drawn. You can gain no good from one who has no good in him. Set this down as a rule. Nor let brilliancy of talent, hospitality, or warmth of protestation, ever impose upon you. Those who fear not God do not regard man. He who openly breaks one commandment ought to be suspected of an inclination to disregard any other, should a temptation so to do come in his way. What should hinder him ? he has no proper principle. Good fellowship is a term so much abused as almost to become a beacon. Your good fellow will claim all the honours belonging to the term, because he does not grudge his wine ; when he is all the while aiming to rob you by his superior skill at cards, or to debase you by the very wine he so liberally proffers to beastly intoxication. Your man of honour is, perhaps, in points, a cheat, a swindler, a

murderer, under the name of a duellist. 'With their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united.' Many have the name of being worthy, kind-hearted creatures, who, by that very circumstance, ought the more to be hunted, as the sins they indulge in, seem, to a young mind, balanced by their good qualities. Vice, in all the deformity of profligacy, is not so dangerous, as not being so likely to allure, as that vice which appears in the garb of benevolence. It is Satan putting on the appearance of an angel of light. Ever recollect, this is the disgrace of any people; nothing can make it honourable, or take from it its natural, inalienable quality of evil. You venture too much when you come into an atmosphere so contagious; venture the more from your previous distance from such society; as persons in high health, fresh from the country, are most apt to catch the small-pox, when they come in contact with the diseased.

On the other hand, be not too easily disgusted with any symptoms of reserve or uncommunicativeness which may appear in some

one, who, possibly, may be a worthy person, able and willing to yield you much instruction. The locks which are most difficult to open often guard the greatest treasures. Perhaps, when he has ascertained your character, when he shall find that not a pert, or idle curiosity dictates your inquiries, but a desire of essential and important information, he may be found as willing to give, as you can be to receive it. An admirable partnership this, when the desire of improvement meets with knowledge, and kindness disposed to give it out.

There is great difficulty in dropping an acquaintance who is discovered to be not proper for continuance. Be cautious, therefore, not to hook yourself in too firmly before you are sure that, in all points, the connexion will be safe and suitable. You can with ease advance in some cases, when to return is next to impossible, or only to be accomplished with lacerations of a painful nature.

There are cases in which it might be easy and honourable to give your reason openly :

“ Sir, I perceive your principles and mine differ ; we cannot associate.” Or, more plainly still, “ What you pride yourself in, appears to me to be gross iniquity ; I cannot partake with you.”

This, perhaps, will draw forth a sneer at your maidenishness, or a sarcasm at your puritanical strictness. If such sneer and sarcasm have power to make you forego principle, and do despite to conscience, your whole character is in great danger. By all that you hope for of reputation and self-approbation, I charge you summon up courage, in the first instance, to say, you do not account a sneer to be an argument ; you are determined not, in so weak and silly a way, to give up better notions. If this should produce an angry reply, your withdrawing will put an end to the altercation, and give an excellent opportunity for escaping the dreadful snare. Give up the contaminating society without delay, nor heave a sigh, unless it be for the blindness, depravity, and self-destruction of the parties whom you forsake.

If they are adepts in villany, or have any further view upon your morals, or your property, they will not even seem to be angry; they will dread the result of giving offence, or seeming to be offended. They will, in all probability, humour you a little; will drop the more offensive part of the proposal; defer it all for the present; or, affecting to be convinced by your reasonings, give up the whole for awhile. In this case be aware; lest the hope, the vain hope, of doing them good should engage you to continue with them a little longer. Your danger is great in this case. The probability of recovering, either by your example or precept, those who are sunk in vice, is very small indeed; but the probability of your being contaminated to their base degree, by any considerable continuance, is very great. Were you older, and your principles well settled, this advice might be given in terms less positive; but in your case, while you are too ignorant to meet their arguments, or even to be aware to what these insinuations tend; too young to have influence enough to curb them, and, as indeed the advice supposes, while

your character is actually forming, and in the first part of the process too ; to fly from such contaminating society is absolutely necessary. Not a moment should be lost. Prudence, experience, and religion, all join to say, avoid it, pass not by it, but turn away.

A little courage exerted, or a little suffering endured, at an early stage in the connexion, or at an early period of life, will suffice to extricate you from very dangerous circumstances. If you suffer the opportunity to slip, you may never recover it. More intimacy may give more ties to bind you ; every fresh meeting adds a new rivet to your fetters. The sooner, therefore, they are snapped, the easier it is done, and the better for you.

Hesitation, in this case, must spring either from not perceiving the danger ; from a latent wish to indulge in what you discern to be improper ; or from a considerable and blameable weakness of character. If you can ascertain from which, it may be of advantage to you, as showing to you your own self : but this

examination will best be made at a distance; do not suffer yourself to be detained near the contagion; while you are reasoning to ascertain the degree of its malignancy, or the mode of its action, its action will take hold on your vital powers, your health will be undermined, perhaps your life will be sacrificed in the experiment.

It is well when the case is plain enough to admit of such prompt decision; where you only suspect, there such sudden and total separation may seem improperly abrupt, and yet the danger may be equally real and alarming. Never lull suspicion asleep. Convince yourself if you can; but if not, then listen to the voice of caution, and withdraw.

The principle of selecting may have its difficulties, especially with a youth who cannot be supposed able to command his opportunities. Yet it is to give up principle in a very important part of its application, to join by choice in any company which may happen to offer, without considering what may be the

Probable effect upon yourself. To return to such company would be to subject yourself to hazards of no trifling nature ; to be ready for it at the first call, when that call was not imperious, is to show a culpable weakness. No forming of one's own character is likely to proceed under such auspices. Never make yourself and your future respectability the sport of accident.

We say sea-bathing does good ; but there are cases in which it would do harm : no one ought to venture it who is not well aware of its propriety, or, at least, of its safety. Can the health of the body be more important than that of the mind ? Is the mind less liable to sustain a surfeit, to receive an irrecoverable chill, or to be thrown, by improper stimulus, into a fever ? When so much contagion abounds, do not enter every door which may stand open, and where, too, you have no occasion to go, lest you encounter some direful malady, and repent, at groaning leisure, your want of care.

Indeed, till you are a little aware of the

specific nature of your company, you cannot tell how to behave among them with propriety. Go not with your pockets carelessly open among sharpers; do not exhibit the simplicity of your mind, till you are aware that no one will endeavour to take advantage of it. There is an openness of carriage lovely in youth, but it will give great opportunity to knavery, and ought not to be indulged in every, or in unknown, or in untried company. It may happen too, that, in a thoughtless moment, you may grievously offend some very worthy person, by what, in another case, might be an innocent joke, merely because you did not know the character, or the office, or the disposition of the party.

Your own reputation may thus be injured irrecoverably, and only for want of first knowing who you were among. The danger, however, is much more likely of your committing yourself, by opening your mind incautiously, and thereby giving power to the designing to hold you in thralldom, or to do you specific injury. Who does not know, that many evils have been

occasioned by incautious words, spoken in a stage-coach, when the parties themselves, to whom those words related, were fellow-passengers, though unknown? Any unselected society exposes to similar dangers. You may have to rue an inconsiderate speech, a familiarity, or even a reserved answer wrongly given, as long as you live. Such society will often occur, but be yourself careful not to rush into it. Go rather where you know, and are known; you have then a fair prospect of doing, or of getting good.

Much of the society to which you will have access is common-place, can scarcely be pronounced evil, yet promises little good. In this case you are wasting your time, if you give much to it. He who has a pursuit in view, cannot afford to be idle. While you are not gaining by any company, you are losing; and that to a considerable amount, while opportunity is accounted of value. There will indeed be cases in which you have no choice; the company is rendered necessary, by business or by relationship; you cannot well refuse to

associate, unless you will break through considerable proprieties. In this case, the principle of selection may yet take place without offence, by seating yourself near, or attaching yourself to, those of the party most able, or most inclined, to give the conversation an improving turn. Should you be of necessity distant from these, and confined to the ignorant and the giddy, try yourself to set the good example, and, without prosing or prolixity, aim to throw out hints, which may lead away from chatter, and give the appearance of discourse. Should even this resource fail, a careful observation of the emptiness, folly, or vice, which occasions your repulse, may strengthen your own judgment, as to the superior value of knowledge, principle, taste, and piety.

The principle of selecting your associates will operate in a very imperfect manner, unless you are well aware what is essentially or comparatively the best company.

The term "good company," has a variety of acceptations. In some connexions, such as

can drink their three bottles, and especially if they can sing, with appropriate feeling, an indecent song, are esteemed good company. In other places, the term refers to dress. Those who are always fashionably accoutred are undeniably good company. In some cases, the parties so denominated must have family pretensions; while in others, mere wealth, especially if ostentatiously displayed, shall dub a visit in such a quarter, seeing good company. Now it happens, that the term good can hardly attach to any thing so completely external, and distinct from the mind, as wealth or fashion; and cannot, with the least propriety, be affixed to any thing in its own nature vicious, or tending that way. Even talents will hardly suffice, if alone, to substantiate a claim to the honourable designation. The excellence of talent may, indeed, make the company so much the worse, as it is so much the more seducing; at any rate, let a freedom from vice be an absolute ingredient; let the presence of frivolity disannul the claim. Do not esteem that to be good company, in which you cannot, in all probability,

gain any good to yourself. And here be aware, let mental improvement, at least destitute of vicious accompaniments ; if not absolute piety, be the good which you esteem, and seek after, in that society which you voluntarily choose.

If you have formed your notions of excellence for your own attainment on a high scale, you will not be likely to approve of company which falls much below that mark.

The company in which you rest contented will serve well to denominate your own character. According to the old proverb " tell me your company, and I will tell you what you are." Examine, therefore, yourself faithfully on this point, you may attain a near approach to that self-knowledge, so important to every one. Should you catch yourself often veering towards companions whom your judgment does not approve, suspect there is some unworthy principle at work upon the weaker part of your mental constitution ; and the undermining influence must be expected to produce a downfall somehow. An alteration

becomes absolutely necessary, for your own security.

Nothing here said is intended to generate either pride or fastidiousness ; nothing which can break through ties of affection, duty, or common politeness ; but only to engage your choice to the best association within your reach. While we totally exclude vicious society, it may safely be stated, that scarcely any mixture of worthy persons ought to be deemed uninteresting. Although their talents may not be extraordinary, there is a shrewdness in common life often very well worth regarding. Although acquired attainments may be few, yet common sense is always of value. And where such society consists of persons older than yourself, you must be very inattentive if you cannot pick up something well worth bringing away. Do not, at any rate, offer yourself to despise the party ; it is most likely that you, at your time of life, are by no means qualified to do that. Should you unfortunately make a mistake in estimating your own value, and come into a company with

sensations which put theirs to a low degree in the scale of excellence, you, by that means, render it almost impossible to obtain any benefit from that quarter, whatever real opportunity there might be. Not to add, that you are very liable, in such a mood, to expose not only your own ignorance, but, what is still more disgraceful, your superciliousness, and self-conceit. You will not soon or easily recover social esteem, if you let yourself out a few times in this manner; because you set the powerful principles of self-love, in every bosom that observes you, quite in alarm, in opposition, perhaps in revenge.

Possibly the parties have no literary attainments, and you prize literature. You are right, but are they wrong? They, perhaps, have not had any opportunity to acquire that which else their native taste would have appreciated rightly. Do not blame, but pity. Rather be thankful for your own opportunities, and be concerned to improve accordingly. But ere you condemn any worthy person's company, inquire whether the deficiency may not lie in

your inability for discovering how to draw out what knowledge or talents they possess. It requires some knowledge to ask a proper question; perhaps you are deficient here. It requires some skill, such as experience only can give, to put a proper question in a proper manner; and your experience has been so confined, that you have but one mode of proceeding, which you expect will, or ought, to operate in every case and on every character. You might as well expect that one key should open every lock. That very vivacity on your part, which you think should lead to communication, may be that which prevents it; it may appear to another to be pertness.

There is one process which will seldom fail to afford something interesting and improving, if you have skill to manage it. Every man, however narrow his capacity or his sphere of action, understands his own affairs, his profession, occupation, craft.

Oh, but they are a pack of ignorant farmers. Do not be too hasty with your epithets;

all farmers are not ignorant. But they will talk of nothing but ploughing and tythes; and why are not these interesting to you, but because you do not understand them? I am afraid the charge of ignorance will attach to yourself. Or you found out that he was an old codger of a lawyer; indeed! then you had only to listen to hear that which may, by and bye, be important to your welfare; or, they had but little to say, and were soon silent. True; and it seems you had not skill to set them going again by an appropriate question. Where then lies the blame? not wholly on the hardness of the ore, but in your not knowing how to break, or melt, or dissolve it, so that the precious metal might be obtained.

When, therefore, you discover yourself to be out of your customary modes of instruction, do not be testy, sullen, or fastidious, but esteem the opportunity rather the more for its rarity, and try to make the best of it. I have known a single question, or an application for knowledge, such as the person possessed, fill him with so much pleasure, or pride (it mat-

ters not to us which), as should set him in full talk, communicating ideas which could not by us be any where else obtained. To say these ideas are of no value, you do not want to understand this or that, is to show yourself very confined indeed in your views of life. Time may come that you may wish you had paid more attention, while you had the opportunity.

If you have your eyes about you, you will scarcely ever want objects worthy your examination. Look, and you will see. When indeed the objects are various, you ought to discriminate ; and look most attentively at those which may afford you most gratification or benefit : 'tis else wasting your time and energies.

A word or two may not be needless to guide you in a proper proportioning the time you allow to company : error, either as to too much, or too little, has its inconveniencies.

When opportunity serves, the young are most likely to feel the attractions of society

prevalent in too great a degree. They would always be out; a dangerous symptom, wherever it appears. If you have plenty of time, take care not to squander it away. The claims of solitude upon you, for a considerable share of it, are imperious. Your truest interest lies in listening to that still small voice. Be not tempted then to waste it all away, and leave your own self destitute. Out of your plenty of time, carefully apportion so much as shall be plenty for retirement. Visit yourself, your own best friend; and where frequent converse may be of essential service. Plenty of time may thus produce plenty of improvement, without hindering your attention to social intercourse.

Should your opportunities be few, should necessary avocations swallow up most of your precious hours, that will perhaps imply society, and will make retirement so much the more delightful. Should your very business be of a solitary nature, yet be covetous of some retirement; don't forsake your little study quite. No gay assembly, not even of literary

merit, can make up to you so important a loss. Your own improvement will go on slowly, if you do not allow yourself time to arrange whatever you may in public pick up. If you do not in private review whatever you have in society done or said, if you do not talk with yourself, the talk of others is only rattle.

There are two modes in which we have access to social intercourse; the set visit, and the friendly call. Both have their advantages. The set visit may best improve your manners, and train you to ease and politeness; but the friendly call, if judiciously treated, may promise most for your mental advantage.

When the company is large, it will hardly be proper that you, a youth, should stand forward and take up the public attention. You may play an under part, with propriety, in some corner, with a few near you. But your principal advantage will arise from observing well all that passes; listening if your superiors carry on any thing like conversation, or joining in it, if any gap appears, and any

thing tolerably worth saying on the subject should occur to your mind. Ever keep in view, that your main object is self-improvement; rather to learn of others, than to display yourself. Display, where there is but a small stock, is only an exhibition of poverty; let not self-conceit betray you to it, at least not on such a principle.

There are cases in which you can in no way obtain addition, but by confessing the scantiness of your store. Never be above owning your own ignorance, when you meet with a person able and willing, to give you information. It may be a mark of fashion to wonder at nothing, to show no marks of surprise, as that would be confessing ignorance. The principle is a silly one; at least dictated by pride, not by good sense. It may be convenient to some persons who are ignorant, and who, from their age, and rank, might be supposed to be better informed, to whom ignorance is a disgrace, and the confession of it humiliating; but it is seldom that disgrace or humiliation attach to the young

(whose opportunities must be few), on account of not having seen before, phenomena in nature or in art. The burst of joy from the mind which sees something curious for the first time, shows that interest is taken in it, and partly repays a kind instructor for his trouble in explaining. The apathy which many affect in such cases, is insulting to others, and is rightly repaid on themselves, by continuing and accumulating ignorance.

Be not ashamed, therefore, to observe diligently, and to inquire into any thing you do not understand, provided the time and opportunity are suitable. One answer may give you comprehension in a moment, and prevent you from ever misconceiving such a point again. The friend who is able to give you information will yield it more pleasantly, when he finds that the knowledge has not yet been communicated, and that you are really desirous to receive it.

It is possible, however, that the person who is most willingly and kindly disposed to in-

struct you, may not be so at all times and seasons. Be very watchful to discover whether your calling on him may be, in any respect, inconvenient, by its frequency, or by any other circumstance. It is making him pay for his own goodness by inconvenience and anxiety, which is not fair. The ardour of youth is apt to press too closely, for a man whose time is of value, to endure it; and their inexperience makes them unaware how many things may occur to make a shorter visit most agreeable. There is good sense in the advice which says, "keep thy foot from the house of thy friend, lest he be weary of thee and hate thee." Happy is the youth who has access to a friend able to afford information, and more happy he who can, with politeness, dexterity, and inoffensive manners, avail himself of such an opportunity of improvement.

CHAP. X.

FEMALE INTERCOURSE.

THE title of this chapter may surprise some; it may seem needless to introduce it, in a work that affects the formation of the juvenile character: to the author, this chapter appears of peculiar importance. The influence of the female sex on a growing youth must be something, may be much; it had need, therefore, be regulated, nay, it is worthy of being cultivated, with the greatest care.

One of the first symptoms of manliness with silly lads is to rail at the whole sex. The boy begins sparring with his sisters, learns the common-place jokes which aim to lower their talents, their importance in society, and their general estimation; not aware that hereby he exposes his own ignorance, his want of discernment, and of manners.

That any one should aim to defile the fountain at which he drinks every day, would be esteemed strange; a mark rather of folly than of wisdom. Yet what is it better, when a lad who owes every thing worthy the name of comfort to female assiduity, knowledge, or kindness, is ungrateful enough to spurn at the hand which proffers so many enjoyments; to return sarcasm for affection, and treat with contumely, daily care?

That youth is ignorant of many things must be owned; but ignorance, in this case, can scarcely be pleaded; for the facts arise every day, and force themselves upon his observation; where the principle is not more base, we must impute it to a silly affectation of manliness, which fancies it is raised above whatever it can seem to despise; forgetting that the very character of dependence proves the contrary.

I have already treated of relative duties, and do not intend to repeat what has there been stated. My purpose now is rather to

shew how great is the operation of female influence in forming the young man's character; and how important it is that he does not set out with spurning at that, which might yield him so much assistance.

It is well for the child that his mother, and his sisters, if older, or perhaps even if younger than himself, had the formation of his infancy. Gently were his ideas expanded under such fostering care; sweetly were his feelings trained to sensibility and honour, and his limbs to activity. Is the time come for despising their assistance?—No! says common sense, nor will it ever. Our connexion with that fairer, feebler, more refined part of our nature, is too intimate, too constant, too efficient, ever to be disregarded with propriety.

When, therefore, any one of your young companions affects the wit, and would sharpen his leaden sarcasms against the female character, as a fair butt; set it down as a mark of a weak head or a base heart: it cannot be sense, or gratitude, or justice, or honourable feeling of

any kind. There are, indeed, nations where a boy, as soon as he puts off the dress of a child, goes that same day and beats his mother, to shew his manhood. These people live in the savage realms of Africa, and there let them be; to imitate them in any degree is to affect barbarism, and return to the savage state. If any of your elder associates thus defame the sex, suspect him of having cause, which implies in him a vile taste as to the parties whose intimacy he has sought; he is exposing himself and his own base conduct while he rails. He may, perhaps, never have found an excellent character among them; but the fault lies in his not looking where they were.

Seeing that we must of necessity associate much with females, it is wisdom to make what fair advantage of it we can, and this is by no means a difficult business; we have only to be true to ourselves, and to the opportunities afforded by their intimacy. That much injury may be done a lad by improper associations of this kind is allowed; and why? because their influence is natural, insinuating, powerfully

coercive. Surely such reasons must weigh much to prove that well-intended similar influence must be of admirable use.

The very presence of a respectable female will often restrain those from evil, whose hearts are nevertheless full of it. It is not easy to talk, or to look obscenely, or even to behave with rudeness and ill manners under such restraint. The frequent, the customary company of one whom the youth respects, must have a happy influence, in teaching him to love honourable conduct; we may fairly hope at least, in accustoming him to restrain his less honourable feelings. Frequent restraint tends to give the actual mastery; every approach towards this must be of value. There is a delicacy too in female society which serves well to check the boisterous, to tame the brutal, and to embolden the timid. Whatever be the innate character of a youth, it may be polished, perhaps essentially fostered and exalted, by approbation so alluring, so gratifying.

He must have attained great obduracy who

can come from some shameful excess, or in a state of inebriety, into the presence of ladies. At your age, I will not suppose such a case possible; yet I state it to shew that the general known character of female society is inimical to, and tends to repress immorality and every species of indecorum. An influence very suitable to that age, when powers grow faster than does that reason which should direct their operations.

A lad, whose connexions afford him no female society, must be the worse for this privation, upon these principles; he has not had that to repress him which his over-active spirits required, nor that to shape him which his uncouth manners needed. Stiff, awkward, sheepish, or else indelicate, boorish, and gross is he likely to be, when occasionally he comes into a lady's presence. He takes shelter against his own feelings by an obstreperous mirth, or retires, to hide himself from observation which he cannot endure. He feels conscious of his deficiencies, and perhaps avoids, for that reason, the very society which might

tend to cure them. Should he, in his awkwardness, unfortunately commit himself, so as to excite a titter, his feelings toward the sex will possibly sink to disgust or hatred; his character will thus suffer a deterioration of great extent.

Many a diffident youth has been taken under the protection, if it may be so called, of some considerate and respectable woman. A respectable woman, especially with a few years' advantage, can do this without in the least injuring her character, or stepping a hair's breadth beyond the bounds which should surround her sex. Favoured is he who enjoys a fostering care so important: he may learn the value of the sex; learn to esteem them, to discriminate among them, to become proud of such approbation, and in time to deserve it. It is easy to see that the favour of silly, flirting girls (and there are some such), is not what I recommend as thus of value.

Where, then, the character of such society

is pure, is eminent; where sense, cultivation, intellect, modesty, and superior age mark the parties, it is no small honour to a young man to be in favour. Should he be conscious that epithets of a different, of a contrary quality, belong, his being in favour is no honour. He must be like them in some degree, or they would not approve.

When, for your own improvement, you are advised to seek female intercourse, it is proper you should begin when nature began with you. I have already said, respect your mother; I will go further, and say, aim to make her your friend; her inclinations are strong towards such a scheme. If on your side there seems to be any difficulty in it, it shews considerable error, most likely in your own conduct towards her. Are you indeed in a state of estrangement from your nearest, first, and most affectionate guide? Endeavour to restore familiar connexion with her. Whatever judgment your father may have, and far be it from me to undervalue it, yet your mother's opinion is not only another help to your own, but, as a wo-

man's, it has its peculiar character, and may have its appropriate value. Women sometimes see at a glance what a man must go round through a train of argumentation to discover. Their *tact* is delicate, and therefore quicker in operation. Sometimes, it is true, their judgment will be not only prompt but hasty, and not well formed. Your own judgment must assist you here. Do not, however, proudly despise her's, but examine it; it will generally well repay the trouble: and the habit of deferring to her opinion will generate in you much consideration, much self-command, much propriety of conduct.

Well do I remember many words of gentle, but sound advice given, as occasions offered, by an affectionate mother. The tender warning, the pious wish, the prophetic hope, came from the heart, and may well be allowed to reach equally deep, if a son's mind be rightly disposed. If she be a woman of sense (and there are people who esteem her so), why should you not profit by her long-exercised intelligence? Nay, should she even be deficient in

cultivation, or in native talent, yet her experience is something, and her love for you will well sharpen all her faculties in your behalf. It cannot be worthiness to despise, or wisdom to neglect, your mother's opinion.

Have you a sister?—What, several? then you are favourably situated; especially if one at least is older than yourself. She has done playing with dolls, and you with bats and balls. She is more womanly; her carriage becomes dignified: do not oblige her, by your boyish behaviour, to keep you at a distance. Try to deserve the character of her friend. She will sometimes look to you for little services, which require strength and agility; let her look up to you for judgment, steadiness, counsel also. You may be mutually beneficial. Your affection, and your intertwining interest in each other's welfare, will hereby be much increased.

A sister usually present, is that sort of second conscience, which, like the fairy ring in an old story, pinched the wearer whenever

he was doing anything amiss. Without occasioning so much awe as your mother, or so much necessary reserve as a stranger, her sex, her affection, and the familiarity between you, will form a compound of no small value in itself, of no small influence, if duly regarded, upon your growing character. Do not think *that* a good joke at which a sister blushes, or turns pale, or even looks anxious. If you do not at first perceive what is amiss in it, it will be highly worth your while to examine all over again. Perhaps a single glance of her eye will explain your inconsiderateness; let it put you on your guard, as you value consistency and propriety of conduct.

There is a sort of gallantry due to the sex, which is best attained by practising at home. Your mother may frequently require your attention—your sisters much more often. Do not want calling, or teasing, or even persuading, to gain from you such attentions as their safety, or their comfort, or their respectability may require. What a *hobby-de-hoy* is that, who can exclaim with disgust, “ Now

shall I have to conduct my sisters home. I wish they would not go out. I hate to dance after them of all persons." To gallant a sister, in such a case, is her due. You are paying respect to yourself, when you suppose you are capable of, and suitable for such a service. She could, perhaps, come home very well by herself; but it would be a sad reflection on you were she to do so. She knows your honour and interest better. Accustom yourself then to wait upon her, if you are able; it will teach you how to wait on others by and bye, and, meanwhile, it will give a graceful set to your character.

It will be well for you if your sisters have young friends, whose acquaintance with them may bring them sometimes into your society. The familiarity allowable with your sisters, though it may well prepare you to shew suitable attention to other ladies, yet has its disadvantages. You had need sometimes have those present who may keep you still more upon your guard. Your attentions to them will have a more respectful manner. Your

endeavour to appear, that is to be, all right, will become more exact, more systematic.

Do not then try to get out of the way of female intercourse. I have known young lads avoid what they ought to have rejoiced in, and thus lose the beneficial influence. They were, indeed, sensible of not being quite suitable company for any thing delicate or genteel, and they sunk, rather than rose to the occasion. This was not to their improvement, but quite the contrary. I have known some who had not a female cousin, or an acquaintance, whose company might refresh, or polish, or improve them in the least; the consequence must be a degree of rusticity, of awkwardness. What, perhaps, is worse still, this privation made them ready to attach to the first female with whom they afterwards came in contact. Having no conception of the different shades of character among the sex, they were ready to suppose all excellent who appeared fair, all good who seemed gentle. Total privation has its dangers, as well as too great intimacy.

I say too great intimacy ; for nothing here advanced is intended to make you a fribble, or sink the dignity of your own sex in the delicacy of theirs. Though you should be attentive to every female, because of her sex, yet there is a sort of attention some men pay them extremely degrading to themselves, and to the objects of their idolatry. No woman of sense can be pleased with it. No man of sense can endeavour to please by it.

As the object of these remarks is to guide you in the formation of your own character, it is but fair to guard you against this error. You will sink, not rise, if you assimilate to their employments, fears, or frivolity. Should you mingle with females of sense and intelligence, there will be little danger ; but all women are not either sensible, or well brought up. Girls especially, whose character, like your own, is as yet unformed, are but silly themselves ; and can hardly suffice to give strength, direction, or even polish, to yours. I have, therefore, hoped that your sister was older than your-

self: and advise, that you frame your notions of propriety, from those whose conduct has the probability of being most proper in itself.

If the selection of companions of your own sex be important, it is not less so in the case under consideration. For the influence to be good, it is needful that the power which yields it should be good also. There are some even of that sex which ought to be all purity, simplicity, and kindness; there are some whom every principle would teach you to avoid, although received in what is called respectable society. The general idea of what a woman ought to be is usually sufficient to guide you, with a little care, in the application. Such as are forward, soon get marked; the character is what no man of taste can bear. Some are even anglers, aiming to catch gudgeons, by every look; placing themselves in attitudes to allure the vagrant eye. There is scarcely any need to warn you; they give you sufficient notice themselves, unless you are younger than your years. The trifle can scarcely amuse you for an evening; dull must

be the company of one who has nothing to say but what is common-place, whose inactive mind never stumbles upon an idea of its own. You can learn nothing from her, unless it be the folly of a vacant mind. Come away, lest you also catch the same disorder. Of a contrary description is the artful, the manœuvring; such will at a glance penetrate your inmost mind, and will become any thing which they perceive to be agreeable to you; the assimilation is very flattering. You might learn by her what to think of yourself, if you had half her skill.

Prize your privilege, however, should you meet with a few intelligent, agreeable, and respectable of the sex, to whose society you can have frequent access. It must be your own fault if you do not reap much advantage. But should your lot be cast near any who, to good natural abilities, have a judicious education, who may approximate to what is called an elegant mind, I think I need not urge you highly to esteem your opportunity. When wit flies quick and sharp as an arrow, but with-

out any barbed point ; when gentleness is smooth as ivory, as fair too, and as firm, appears in all the conduct ; when literature ornaments and stores ; when rectitude of sentiment gives sterling value to the mind, and piety crowns the whole : the near access to such a woman exalts the character. Her genial influence is always on the side of goodness, and propriety. Her loveliness of mind will give an agreeableness to her person ; it is something “ than beauty fairer,” and recommends to the heart every sentiment, justifies every opinion, gives weight to arguments in their own nature solid, and soothes to recollection and recovery, such as, if reproved by any other voice, might have risen into resistance, or sunk into despair. The caution in such a case need be, take heed of idolatry. Keep yourself clear from fascination, and call in the aid of your severest judgment, to keep your own mind true to principle, which else is in danger of being good, only as a matter of taste, feeling, and blind approbation.

As this is advice to the *Teens*, it will be

supposed that what is now to be said must refer to the latter end of that term. I scruple not to say, keep matrimony in view. Should parents, guardians, and elder sisters cry *hear! hear!* I repeat it distinctly, as my advice to every young man, keep matrimony in view. Never conceive yourself complete without the other half of yourself. The fashion among young men of the present day is to make up their minds to do without it; an unnatural, and therefore an unwise system. Much of our character, and most of our comfort, and happiness, depends upon it. Many have found this out when too late, when age and fixed habits have rendered matrimony hazardous. The effect, however, of matrimony in future life comes hardly within the present address; unless it be to hold it up by honourable testimony, and thereby resist the tendency to despise it, which is, perhaps, even now beginning to operate.

My business is with your growing character. All that has been said of female influence bears upon this point, and then will its utmost efficacy be tried, when your mind shall fancy

it worth while to deserve the approbation of some *one*, whose attractions come upon you with peculiar, and increasing energy. According to her character will your own be, in a considerable degree. Should a mere face fascinate you to a little doll, you will not need much mental energy to please her; and the necessity of exertion on this account being small, your own self will sink, or at least not rise, as it else might do.

Suppose the contrary. Let us imagine that your secret palpitations veered incessantly towards one whose dignity of carriage repressed all improper familiarity, whose refined sentiment, whose literary accomplishments, make it evident that mind must be her object; that answering, nay, superior cultivation, can alone impress her with a favourable opinion: ask your own heart, if every feeling would not be drawn out to deserve, even if there were little hope of obtaining, her regards. The story of Cymon and Iphigenia intimates the power of beauty, mere beauty, to rouse latent abilities, and urge a man of reputed stupidity

to actions which might obtain favourable notice. If, however, the mere external charms can operate to so high and beneficial a degree, what may we not expect when mind, attractive, impulsive mind, operates on a congenial mind, well calculated to receive the impression, and vibrate in harmony to every elegant, honourable, and exalted sensation.

However false in fact the romances of old days may be, they must be true to nature, or they could not interest. If, therefore, some young knight, smitten with the loveliness of the chieftain's daughter, and urged thereby to deeds of chivalry, should purposely attack a giant, or slay a dragon; let us smile, if we please, at the falsehood of the tale; but, let us ask if many a time the story has not been actually true; not in its literal, but its metaphorical import. Giant difficulties have been overcome; the dragon's destruction has been at all hazards achieved, by those who have had it as the impelling principle of action, to deserve one, whose character placed her above hope, on any other terms.

Were I acquainted with you personally, and perceived some honourable attachment thus taking possession of you, I should regard it as a happy circumstance if rightly directed, if managed with prudence, honour, and good sense. Some of the younger part of the company may hail this advice, may prize it above their mother's, and resolve to be in love, and that presently. Do ; but remember, to think yourself in love, and to be in love, are very different things. Again, to be in love, and to play the fool or the knave, under that pretence, are also not necessarily joined. However, try. Be deeply smitten, for a week—nay, for a month, if you please. There is not much fear of a longer duration to such a fancy. The hope of one attachment driving out another, in such a case, is no mean consolation. If you can be kept in tolerable order the while, it were better you were thus honourably, though sillily, set to form plans and hopes, than that you should grow up in the habit of railing at the sex, and at the state, till you almost believed your own rhapsodies.

Couple with this advice the very necessary caution, that, with all your fancies, you must not permit yourself to intimate in any manner to the fair object of them, the silly things which are passing in your mind. If she have sense, she will laugh at, and avoid you; if she have not, then will engagements take place, of the most pernicious tendency if kept, or of the most unhappy influence if afterwards broken. You bring yourself into very uncomfortable bonds. If your sentiments and character are honourable, you oblige yourself, perhaps, to do violence, by snapping injudicious promises, or to ruin your own peace, and the happiness of your partner, by fulfilling vows which time and better experience show ought never to have been made. The liberty to fall in love, does not include a permission to go a-courting. That is quite another thing. I must talk with your father, before I grant that.

In the Life and Letters of the Rev. J. Newton, a circumstance is recorded greatly corroborative of the present advice. He formed a strong

attachment in very early life, at a time when he could not mention it to the fair object, which was well for both parties; but, in future scenes of sorrow, suffering, and temptation; the recollection of her image soothed him, and the hope of one day obtaining her, kept him from perpetrating many dishonourable actions. "The bare possibility of seeing her again was the only present and obvious means of restraining me from the most horrid designs against myself and others."

It will not be quite in vain to you, if your imagination should be haunted with any favourite image, especially if her character be respectable, to say now and then, what would she think were she now to see me? It might help to show you the true character of your employment; might assist in breaking the force of fascinating temptations, and stimulate you to exertions honourable, and thus made, successful.

Even the activity needful to your success in business, may be thus excited and main-

tained. The wish to marry, if it be prudently indulged, will always be connected with the attaining such an income as may fairly be proposed to the party and her friends. He who determines to live a single life, perhaps contracts his endeavours to his sole wants; or squanders without proper calculation, on the idea that he can always procure enough for himself. A bad system this, in every view. That hope which aims at a partner beloved, a family, a fire-side, will become active beyond expectation; will elicit talents, and urge them to their full energy; will court the powerful assistance of economy; and thus eventually will be attained an object, which had, at one time, appeared to be at an inaccessible distance. Little Cupid redeems his character now and then, as well he had need. It is only, however, when he calls in the assistance of prudence that he is likely to do good.

No doubt but this advice is liable to abuse. But it may be fairly asked, what is there which is free from such liability? The counsel may be just, may be important, never-

theless. Let those who disapprove of it give better. If they wholly neglect female influence, that influence will yet be operative. Is it not better to make adequate use of principles so strong, abounding everywhere, and capable of easy application ?

To grow up without attachment to the sex is hardly possible. Wherever it occurs, it includes a loss of some of the sweetest sensations which can swell the bosom. To let such attachments be irregular, is to debase those sensations, to the ruin of character and of internal worth. To regulate them is the only chance for good ; and if early trained to the support of proper feeling and honourable conduct a great advantage is gained, a power like the fulcrum for which Archimedes longed, when he talked of moving the whole globe.

CHAP. XI.

OCCASIONAL DEVIATIONS.

WHATEVER may be a youth's principles or habits, the temptation to occasional deviation from his accustomed strictness of conduct will continually arise. The world is, indeed, one series of temptation to evil; all its businesses, recreations, and afflictions are accompanied by opportunities of going wrong, and by importunities addressed to the powerful principle of evil within; no wonder that the young, the half-steady, are at times overcome; and yet, as it is only now and then, fancy no great harm has happened.

He whose general conduct is correct, unless very clear, and well grounded in principle, will still think well of himself on this account, although he may occasionally indulge in what is not altogether justifiable. His conscience is

soon put to repose again by his returning to what he esteems better. His self-complacency is soothed afresh ; he feels no punishment inflicted, and fancies none is deserved.

“ What this any harm ! ” he cries ; “ a mere trifle—anybody does so, at least now and then.” Let us see if these excuses are just. Indeed nothing needs an excuse which is in itself right ; and the very forming an apology is confessing that all is not correct.

Now that which is not right is wrong ; and the only question is, whether it is worth while to do wrong in any thing. No improper action can be done without guilt incurred, nor without injury to the perpetrator’s self. If conscience, and customary avoidance, call the point in question evil, it requires no casuistry to shew that it is best to refrain from it. But it is a trifle—this is a term which can very seldom belong to wrong conduct. If it is indeed a trifling act, it can only give a trifling pleasure : is it worth while, for so slight a cause, to transgress ? But that which seems a trifle in itself

may possibly have consequences of vast importance. A small flame may set a great house on fire; a short sentence may produce irreconcilable animosity; a silly enjoyment may benumb conscience; a transient pleasure may seal up to everlasting ruin. But it is only for once. I presume, then, the folly is something which may offend God. But try the validity of the excuse by something which men regard. Suppose it to be theft: only once to pick a gentleman's pocket, or appropriate to your own use another's property in the Bank; your mind revolts, and feels that some things ought not to be done even once;—nay, cannot, without forfeiting the whole character, in a manner not only disgraceful, but almost irrecoverable. The matter is not, however, of so serious a nature; it is, indeed, what everybody allows himself to indulge in upon occasion? Here the fallacy lies in the vagueness of the term everybody. If by this you mean that persons truly honourable, and especially truly religious, do not condemn, I do not see where lies the necessity of an excuse, or how it can be termed a deviation from principle; for such

persons will not turn to the right hand or to the left from what is strictly honest, chaste, sober, and of good report. We will come at the truth at once. By everybody, you mean the general run of people in business practise the trick now and then; the case is common among persons of fashion; people in very respectable rank in life allow it, if not too openly done; or many received as religious professors have been detected in it. This may be true, too true; and if you are content to herd with such, these pages will be lost upon you. Remember, if you choose their company, you choose for both worlds. The aim of this remonstrance is to raise you above such descriptions of people; to give you truer notions of honour; to rescue your mind from such false reasoning; the first step towards which is scrupulously to avoid, even for a single indulgence, anything which a discriminating conscience represents to you as evil, as needing concealment or excuse.

Lest, however, we should seem to be captious or overbearing, neither of which disposi-

tions is a virtue, it may be proper to make our inquiries into the case more specific. The deviation must be either from the common mode of your proceeding merely, or from the plain line of propriety and duty. For instance, it may be your usual custom to retire to rest at a certain time, which is best for your night's repose and for your morning's studies, but a few friends and entertaining converse tempt you to give another hour to their company. There may be no evil in this,—that is, no moral evil; and as to the personal harm, from the irregularity in your repose, that will soon be regained by return to your accustomed hours. But is this all, or indeed the main point? These companions, are gay, are sensual; they will spend the time in mirth that debauches the mind, in sneers which undermine the principles. Now, say honestly, is it right, is it wise, even once to comply? Where only our own rules, though good ones, are at stake, the breach may have little evil in it; but where the rule broken is divine, the case alters instantly. Here is the true adjustment of now and then—or never.

When, therefore, the deviation includes in it sin—yes, call it by its right name; when it is to sin of any kind you are tempted, do not for a moment hesitate. It does not want consideration; that one circumstance is decisive. It is at the peril of all most dear to you that you suffer yourself knowingly to offend. Your mind ought to be made up as completely on this head (I grieve to be obliged to resort to the comparison), as if it were to dishonesty or murder you were tempted. You would not for a moment stop to consider whether you would or would not lie, or steal, or commit forgery, or shoot a friend; can you then hesitate, and question, and seek subterfuges to excuse yourself, when the command to be broken rises higher, even to the honour of God, and his express injunction?

Even if it be only some customary rule of your own, which you are inclined to break through now and then, it will be well to consider first, whether it will be worth while; if the rule were wisely made; that it is unwise to break it may be strongly suspected. Yet cir-

cumstances may change, and make an alteration in the conduct necessary, or at least proper; but while surrounding circumstances continue the same, be jealous of any breach upon your own established modes of action.

One of the great evils of such a deviation is, the loosening effect it has upon internal principle. Time has been that your conduct could not be turned aside to any bye path; your sense of propriety, and decorum, and consistency remained firm; and so did your resolution, at all events to conform your behaviour to it. What occasions your present laxity? do you see the principle in another light? if so, examine; and should you have made a mistake, it is never too late to improve. Determine what is proper to be done, and then abide by it.

The moral principles of action are as unchangeable as is He from whom they spring. Be not in any degree moved to treat them lightly; whatever deteriorates your accurate and instant perception of these, will do great

injury to your whole character. To be able to act in opposition to them, or without giving to them due regard, is no gain. Their imperious right to rule is not only paramount above all that can come in competition, but unceasing : no time, or place, or circumstances, can take away the turpitude of that which breaks in upon any rule which God has declared to be agreeable to his own holy nature. He is of one mind, and who can turn him? Though we believe not, yet he abideth faithful—he cannot deny himself. To bear this in mind will be of excellent use ; it is the compass by which our frail bark may be safely steered among rocks and quicksands. Never part with it, never deviate from it ; for it has not, like the mariner's guide, any variation.

Even when the matter may be a trifle,—that is, some rule of your own contriving,—yet here principle and regularity are of great importance. If the rule is not of much value, yet the giving up a rule is of hurtful influence, as it seems to say rules are not of importance : the mind is thus in danger of that desultori-

ness so hurtful to any concern; and especially when the object is the formation and fixing of our characters.

If it were certain that the breach of regularity proposed would be single, when it is not of moral action, it might be of less consequence: this is, however, hardly to be expected. The fence which might have protected your plantation is broken by a single gap: the continuity is often the main hope of safety. He that climbs over the hedge once, as thinking it the shortest way, or the easiest, will be tempted often to make the same hazardous and debasing experiment. There is, indeed, little power in principle to prevent it, especially as principle is the very matter given up by the supposition. Accordingly, we shall find that the next opportunity occurring will have less resistance made to it. It is easier in itself, and the habit of breaking through rules will be found not so difficult to fasten as the habit of carefully keeping them. In business, the routine is not often of a moral nature; but being of great service, it is usually kept up di-

ligently, as tending to the prosperity ultimately aimed at. And where insolvency eventually takes place, it will often be connected with, if not owing to, successive breaches made in rules ; of none of which it could be said it is a moral duty, or that the neglect were a sin.

There is nothing stationary in nature, in art, or in morals. Whatever does not go forward will in all likelihood become retrograde. Can we bear the thought that such a circumstance should happen to our character? A man's self sinks, diminishes, becomes feeble, if his personal character fails in any degree ; the danger is therefore greater than has yet been stated. A deviation, though only occasional, may not merely increase in frequency, but in degree. The waters may penetrate the bank first at a crevice ; yet if that be not soon stopped, they will be seen to rush out with greater violence, forming to themselves a wider and more destructive opening. All is now at hazard. The fact ought not to be contemplated as a curiosity, but the mind should be alarmed at the fast-coming devastation.

It is seldom, indeed, that any well-taught mind falls egregiously all at once. There are gradations in all crimes; steps sometimes, which mark the progress with awful precision; but more often the descent is like a gently-inclined plane, so gradual that its declination is scarcely to be noted. The character, unless nicely inspected, seems as fair as ever; and this close observation is hardly to be supposed in the youth himself. So alarming, so disgraceful a failure, he is loth to allow, and is, perhaps, fruitful in excuses, to shew that it actually amounts to nothing, or to nothing worth regarding. As ever you would avoid sinking whither so many have sunk before you, examine the progress of their depravation, you will then perceive the natural bias to evil increases with indulgence, in a manner which ought to put you on your guard against the slightest errors in judgment or in conduct.

If your own powers of resistance are weakened by yielding, there is still another consequence; every weakness on your part thus discovered by your seducers, gives to them

greater opportunity and advantage. Those whose pleasure or profit is connected with leading a youth astray are expert at discovering where his weakness lies. They know well, that to press against that confessed weakness with too much violence at first, would excite alarm, and defeat their base schemes. They are wise to do evil, and proportion their operations in a gentle, a scarcely perceptible manner. They will find excuses, which look almost like reasons, for turning aside. The sophistry of their statements will not be perceived by the unwary; especially if his own wishes point the same way. And while he is hesitating, they have succeeded in drawing him on one side at least: they will succeed still further, and turn him quite back again, if he continue to suppose an occasional error is of little importance.

It requires a strength of mind, such as we can hardly hope to find in one thus drawn aside, should he even perceive his error, to return manfully and at once, to the truth he formerly felt to be right. All the argument must be

debated over again, and at great disadvantage by a youth who has once yielded up. The reasons to which he must now make an appeal will be easily silenced by those who remind him of his having despised all, and given way. The level they have brought him to, in fact, they will with little difficulty maintain. He might have kept his station with ease ; he never can regain it without great difficulty.

Perhaps, by the circumstance of having our reputation in their hands, if the matter is not known, they have a strong, though a dishonourable influence. It must be expected they will use it. The sentiments of honour which should bind to secrecy, will not have much hold on those whose object it is to undermine such sentiments entirely, that you may the more easily fall a prey to their schemes. Should you believe their promises of faithfulness, it will only be to put yourself still more in their power, and to make your fall, which cannot thus be avoided, become the more precipitous and destructive, by its deceptive delay.

To hide what has already been done amiss is often the bait held out to allure the young to more habitual, to wider deviations. Should you feel yourself thus entangled, instant exertion is necessary; and nothing but determinate refusal, and obstinate (we may use the word here with great propriety), obstinate resistance, can avail you. Like a bird upon a limed twig, gentle struggling only fixes it the more firmly; a mighty effort is needed, and should it lose a few of its gay feathers by the exertion, yet, as it will save its life by the means, there is no great reason to lament the price. One may indeed lament the incautious folly which brought it into circumstances so dangerous; one might aim to scare away any, who should seem inclined to rush into similar circumstances. For your own sake, then, never give so dangerous an ascendance to such as must intend you evil. Keep out, completely out of their toils, as you value all you have hitherto attained, and all you wish, and honourably hope to gain, of rising character.

Scarcely will the temptation to deviate:

from rectitude rise from yourself, if you have had any advantage of pious, or even of moral education : it is some one older, who thinks to rule you ; , some one more cunning, who thinks to deceive you. As you would not lay your hand on the serpent's nest, nor suffer the *boa constrictor* to give you the slightest embrace, beware of any one, old or young, whatever his reputation may be, who would smooth to you the path of sin, laugh at your pious sentiments as prejudices, and excuse all, by insinuating it is but a trifle.

It is a just character of all we do, that the mere present action is but a small part of the whole process ; every thing we do or say is but as seed sown, which will certainly spring up after awhile with its appropriate fruit. That it will yield its abundant harvest at death, and at judgment, may be quite beyond the feelings of your seducers. Your own heart must, however, be rendered very callous if you can put such considerations quite away. Remember then, that long before those appalling seasons, you may, and in all probability will, “ eat of

the fruit of your own doings." When accumulated folly shall press upon you with the weight of years, and long-continued deviations, then will remorse seize you beyond the power of your avoidance. Do not, cram your aged pillow with thorns sown in youth. That hoary age will need such recollections as may support the mind: it is cruel to lay up in store such as shall make memory your torment.

Should you think yourself capable of forgetting such things as these, I must not question it. Your experience hitherto, perhaps, warrants the expectation. Yet recollect, that the united testimony of age is against you. That was a dreadful groan uttered by one in former days: "Thou writest bitter things against me; thou causest me to possess the iniquities of my youth." When these iniquities last, and swell, and become more malignant, as is the usual process, it cannot be that the sinner should not feel it. Whenever that sensation shall arise, it cannot be a pleasant one; it must excite sorrows of a very pungent

nature. Will not this remorse over-balance all that you once esteemed as pleasure in the bye-path? Most probably your own estimate of sensations and joys, which you once pronounced delightful, will greatly alter. Coming to an object, and receding from it, generally present different, perhaps contradictory ideas. A noble lord, who had figured in the higher circles, who had tried all he wished, and with powers of enjoyment superior to most, spake of his indulgences with regret, when, after years of vanity, he stated his feelings thus : “ I have been behind the scenes ; I have seen what is the stuff that life is made of, and I loath the tawdry deceptions for which I bartered my present and my eternal happiness.” It is a sad exchange when a man barter his peace of mind for any thing, especially if it be for a bauble.

But let the best be supposed, though a very unlikely case. Let us imagine that the deviation proposed will actually remain the only one through life ; does it not strike at once as a great pity, that to so fair a life one error

should attach. The whiter is the garment, the more easily discerned, and the more offensive, is one single spot. Can your own mind be ignorant of it, however secret? Can your own conscience forget, or your own reviving honourable principles (for such we are supposing), ever approve it. If, indeed, that delinquency remain, as hoped, the only one, your recovery must be owing either to the interference of friends, or to the regaining of your own feelings, the perception of the precipice towards which you were approaching, or to the actual sufferings occasioned by the fall. To which of these will you voluntarily submit? Nay, recollect yourself in time, and do not deform yourself for life with a lameness which will always occasion halting, nor debase your honourable escutcheon by any sinister baton. Do not let down your own dignity for so small a gratification; do not grieve your best friends, by compliances which must lower you in their esteem. If you reckon yourself sure of their affection, of their support, and are therefore careless of their approbation, I am afraid your deviations have not been occasional;

nothing but habitual vice can bring the mind to this. I am afraid all remonstrance with you will now be in vain; your enemies have obtained fast hold of you. Depend upon it, however they may praise your adroitness and extol your courage, in snapping, at their suggestion, so many bands, you are yet despised by them.

Do applauding spectators approve?—never, no, never. Be not deceived by their shouts; they think you a fool for desiring such praises as theirs. Is there no one who might happen to catch you in those moments, whose mere presence would disconcert you? As at the Roman games once, the vilest of the people refused to proceed, while Cato was present. Pass not by this hint carelessly. Think whose eye would appal you most; some friend of your father's, who once had better hopes of you; your tutor; your minister; or even some young friend, with whom you were on intimacy, in days of better feelings, with whom you are, perhaps, still on friendly terms, though, thus discovered, that must all cease.

The simple answer to such questions will decide, if you wish to come to a decision, whether the deviation adds to your respectability, whether you were wise even to begin it; whether every principle of honour, of interest, of duty, of character, does not call upon you, instantly to snap at once all your growing bonds, to retrace your steps, and gain, if possible, the vantage ground, which in so unwise a manner you have lost.

CHAP. XII.

ECONOMY.

THERE are few things which have stronger claims on your daily attention than the management of your finances. It is most likely, that at school you learnt nothing on this head, unless by now and then an admonitory letter from home, which you attributed, not to the kindness and wisdom of your friends, but, most unjustly, to ill humour or a niggardly disposition. If they supplied you without any regular allowance, if they administered to your caprices without check, then the charge of unkindness has some foundation; it was the most hurtful conduct towards you they could adopt, and will have baleful influence on you for a long while.

Under such management you must be quite ignorant of the value of money. If you refuse

to learn now, you will be taught by a calculating world, who will know your income much better than yourself, and who will not fail to retort your folly on you in a manner not very courteous.

Your present season, then, is of great importance ; with a little care, you may learn to proportion your expences to your income, one of the first and most influential principles of your political economy. The idea, perhaps, has been to raise your income to your wants, rather than reduce your expenditure to your receipt, which is the only method really in your power. Indeed, when a young lad has only himself to supply, and, perhaps too, that merely in trifles, the term wants must be greatly reduced in its meaning. If you have not wisdom or integrity enough to manage matters on a scale so small, your friends may well tremble for you, as you draw near majority.

Should it have been the case that your friends made you a regular allowance, and you, either by your own good sense or their

firmness, have kept within it, you will already have enjoyed so much benefit by the regular process, as to take well any elucidations on a subject which rises in importance with you every year, on which your personal character will much depend. Very deep moral depravities have taken their rise from a refusal to learn economy at a period of life when certainly it is most easily attained.

We all agree to hate the covetous and despise the sordid. As these qualities seldom appear in the young, their opinion will be gained without any resistance, or even discussion. Should we begin to discriminate as to the parties to whom these qualities apply, there would soon arise symptoms of variation. With some, the persons who will not support them in all their extravagances are undoubtedly covetous. One will begin to think of his old father, another of his bachelor uncle, and wonder why every demand they make upon them is not acceded to, being sure they can afford it. Before, however, indignation is hurled against persons who have done so

much, it ought to be asked, is there no principle but that of a sordid love of self which may dictate the refusal? It were but fair to begin an inquiry at the other end, and see whether, in the lad's own conduct, he has not furnished the ground of their opposition.

To write home a letter for money may be felt, after awhile, rather an unpleasant business. If it succeed, the irksomeness is forgotten till the next occasion rises. But have your friends forgotten that this repetition calls for more care over you, seeing you have no proper command over yourself? Is it, indeed, a matter that gives you no concern, to be told how displeased they were at home with the application? If you hear that your mother, or your sisters, were obliged to entreat for you, and that at last it was sent in a huff; if such things do not touch you, or if all the grief is removed by the sight of the bank-note, your character is in great danger; the finer feelings have lost their influence on your heart, you are growing selfish—a disposition which soon sinks to baseness; as ever you would recov

be aware of your danger ; improve your remaining opportunity to regain the ground lost.

Have you never felt the satisfaction of saying, when pressed at home to take more, " Indeed, mother, I don't want it ; I have got so much left of my last allowance ? A few books I should like to have, but my father has provided them ; he says I shall have them in a week after I get back to school." Is it possible that the joy of the heedless and the extravagant, in their utmost excesses, can compare with this ?

If you are determined to maintain that you do really want so much as you are continually asking for, a very easy method of ascertaining the point might be found in that openness which becomes a child to his best friends. Dare you send home a simple, fair statement of the way in which your last allowances have been expended, or upon what expectations of expences your present application is founded ? If not, if at all events you wish to keep some of the items secret, suspicion may be justified

as to their propriety or prudence. It is most likely those at home have obtained information, and that is the source of the denial ; do not condemn them but yourself.

Have you never heard of a youngster who, being peremptorily obliged to send home some account, has been led to invent several articles of expence which never occurred ? Does not the necessity of falsehood shew something is deeply amiss ? does not the actual resort to deception evince that character is already much injured ? Never do what you shall wish not to be known ; never blind it by downright lying, but rather, in such a case, confess openly ; this may be done by a youth to a parent with far less evil, than that accumulation of crimes which a false step may lead to.

Give me your ear a moment ; we are quite by ourselves. Have you given more than was proportionate to some of the noble charities which aim to send blessings over the globe ? I do not wonder that your young mind has been fired by accounts so interesting, by plans so

vast, by a zeal so disinterested. I should think you had no feelings, if such things did not move you; but whenever our passions are raised we had need keep the sharper watch upon our prudence. Or individual charity has won upon you; the case of distress was irresistible. The sick-bed, the pining parent, the troop of starving children, melted you, and led you to give a great deal more than you intended. Now, if occasions similar to these arise, they do not warrant extravagance. This term may apply as truly to charities as to indulgences, but it has no good meaning in any case. I suspect, however, that the reluctance to explain all does not often arise from sources so honourable.

Would not the bulk of your expenditures shew that not for others, but yourself was all this waste? When gay amusements are suffered to devour, there is no income can suffice their voracity; when taverns and sensual company obtain influence, nothing can keep within bounds; even when extra dress, or toys, and trinkets catch the fancy, there is no saying to

what length you may be carried by those who expose them on purpose to catch the unwary. Can you say you want these? Let your friends judge; every reasonable allowance will they be willing to make you. Your mind will be quite at ease should they approve, and it ought not to feel satisfaction when conscious of the disapprobation of those who love us. If affection cannot weave a web close enough to cover, the stigma must be virulent indeed.

The error in the young, as to money matters, is not often on the side of hoarding; few at that early season attain a vice which seems to be the natural concomitant, the weakness of age. Yet those who are very saving, had need inquire from whom they are withholding it. All we have is given us to use as stewards; none of the young but will have an account to give. There is a certain proportion of our income due to ourselves; not, may we say to you, for the necessities of life, but for certain accommodations suitable to the season you are entering upon. It is possible, though not very likely, that you may be stingy even in

these; but that part most commonly reserved by the ungenerous is what ought to have been distributed to others. The grown-up often forget this claim; no wonder, then, that the young should not have begun to feel it. Inquire if you set apart any portion of your income for purposes connected with the cause of God or the wants of man. Your taste must be very low, if you cannot conceive a pleasure in thus bestowing. Try.

I have known families who never suffer their youngest children to pass a plate: something was put in; perhaps, at first, only a penny-piece; this was of course, found for them, for they had no stock of their own; but the custom produced a feeling, which, as soon as they had any stipend, put them on bestowing some for the benefit of others.

While you were at school, the money given for your seat in a place of worship did not come out of your own pocket; it was set down in the bill, by which means it failed of producing any effect on your own mind. Now

you are more on your own hands, how is it? Do you never recollect the duty of bestowing? I am afraid I need not add the pleasure too. It is, however, clearly stated, that “it is more blessed to give than to receive.”—A short, a cheap way this, to pleasurable sensations; an excellent mode of forming your character for future usefulness. Just ask yourself which is the least expensive department of your disbursements; if you have got any column for charities, see which predominates.

Among the usual occasions of extravagance with the young, we may place the novelty of having rather more cash at command than usual. Your rising years and altering situation occasion you an allowance superior to the school-boy. Are you weak enough to feel the money burn in your pocket? does the sight of it set you on contriving what you shall spend it in? They have begun this allowance too soon. Try and wait awhile, till some fair, some legitimate call arises, and then spend as little of it as the case requires. To deny your fancies will have a double advantage—it will save

your money for better purposes, and it will gain self-command and the power of discrimination. That quantity of cash, which seems now so large to you, will soon be diminished, perhaps long before your next supply; even with all your care, it will slip through. At least, wait till some call arises, and if you should have a trifle left over, when your next allowance comes, the two will agree together well.

When ideas begin to expand, the notions of what belongs to a young gentleman to do, or to have, or to spend, are very apt to take a sudden and extraordinary swell. Those who come from the country fresh up to gay London, generally play the fool for a year or two, and make themselves ridiculous; perhaps get a knack of spending, which they afterwards find it difficult to restrain. With awkward notions about fashionable and genteel, great absurdities are exhibited, if the pocket lasts out; a heterogeneous mixture of what is dashing, and what is tawdry, and what is new; while the beauty of simplicity, of propriety, is quite overlooked. Never aim to dash; conceive your-

self quite out of your sphere when you become remarkable. To be the head of the set must be a poor ambition, if you consider what the set consists of; will be dearly purchased, if it cause you to spend a crown either to attain, or to sustain, the puny rank.

Perhaps to stand forward is not your immediate aim. You only wish to keep on a par with a certain connection with whom you are obliged to associate. This seems more plausible, but is it more real? What would be the consequence, supposing you did not keep pace as to the expences in question?—any real loss, any real dishonour, or only an uncomfortable sensation of inferiority in your own mind? It may be presumed others can better afford as to the present case; if so, your inferiority is real; it cannot be hid, nor would any extravagance in your power conceal the real case. Soon, very soon, is known every one's circumstances and connections, and almost the exact sum he has in his pocket; so that all endeavours to puff ourselves off as on a level with those more richly supplied or more

fashionably connected, must be in vain. The real truth will come out, and then the silliness of aiming to assume a false character, and the weakness which was ashamed of the true one, will both appear ; but the discovery cannot be honourable to your character.

There is, in my opinion, something allied to grandeur of character in the man, who not needlessly, but yet openly, acknowledges his real circumstances ; or who, at least, is never caught endeavouring to hide them by any imposing airs, or tricks, or subterfuges. What he is, he is ; and unless he has lost some opportunity by his own folly, or indolence, or extravagance, where is the disgrace of his being exactly what and where Providence has placed him ? Aim at this independence of character. Let those who may be inclined to value you by pounds sterling, and to despise you for want of weight, let them find talent, and integrity, and activity, and prudence, brought into the account. Whether they do or do not choose to allow them, whether they are or are not able to appreciate them, these have real worth. Do not

submit to be estimated by so low a standard as wealth;—nay, as that allowance which it is thought proper at present to afford you.

It may happen sometimes to persons in business, and whose dealings are much upon credit, that a true exposure of their affairs would bring certain ruin on them. Their temptation to do as others do, who are really more able, is very strong, but such reasons cannot affect you. To keep up your credit is desirable, but the best mode of effecting this is never to be in debt. Credit is only lost when some expectations which had been raised are disappointed. If you never raise any false expectations, if you always fulfil all your promises, your credit is good, and your honour will stand higher, depend upon it, than it could do by launching into expences which are beyond your proper sphere, which could not be kept up without distressing exertions, and which would undoubtedly fail, sometime or another, to your utter downfall.

I give it as most serious advice, never be

in debt. There is nothing so necessary to you as your own liberty and independence. Never let your mind be able to bear the degrading idea, that you owe something which you cannot pay. Be not obliged to pass a shop-window, sneaking, and looking another way. That openness of countenance, so lovely in youth, cannot be kept up with a consciousness of this sort. Is your honour dear to you? depend upon it that tradesmen, one among another, talk you over, and your whole set, and your family connections, and your present follies without scruple;—nay, upon principle; as they have a fellow-feeling for each other's prosperity, and often suffer too much by minors to feel indifferent when any fresh ones come upon their books. Could you bear to overhear such dialogues? could any principle solace your mind under it? would you not feel ready to return all you have had, in anger, perhaps? Yet what right have you to be angry with any one but yourself? Nobody forced you to spend. Be angry with your own weakness, which consented to have what you could not pay for; blame that impatience of gratifica-

tion, which could not wait till your finances were in better order. By that time, perhaps, your vagary might have been over, and the having it at all would have appeared to you as it did at the time to your tardy friends.

Be assured that the first thing you suffer to go down to book will not be the last. The same principle of inordinate desire will continue in action, and put you upon adding another and another article,—each a trifle, a mere trifle,—each of which, so put down, tells the tradesman you are poor, so poor that you cannot pay such trifling sums. Do not submit to it.

Should you actually rub off these debts by honourable payment, then only see what a waste of money is gone for things of no real use to you. However, as you are out of debt, continue so. Recollect your very uncomfortable sensations, a few times especially, while the debt remained. Having regained your liberty, be doubly chary of it. Escape like an affrighted bird from the trap, and beware for the

future of every bait. Only with a weak mind can the temptation to begin a fresh account become successful.

Do you hesitate, then, to survey the great disgrace of coming of age deep in debt. Foolishly has the youth managed, whose season of disfranchisement is saddened over by the consciousness of being by no means at liberty. Instead of surveying life as a fair field, open to energy; the remembrance haunts him of debts, and boyish incumbrances, now loading the man, and preventing the free use of his faculties and means. To have to ask assistance of friends to clear off, ought to be a very humiliating business; especially as then the nature of the debts, and the occasions of them, will appear to yourself in a different light from what they now do. Some shame, some remorse, must arise, unless all your feelings are rendered callous: a worse evil this than being in debt, a more absolute loss of more precious property. Yet often this follows as the natural consequence of the other.

A considerable evil attending upon extravagance, is the frequent temptation it presents, and often, in a very pressing manner, of pursuing some underhand method of obtaining supplies. I dread almost to mention the artifices to which young lads resort when their necessities are urgent. Your present unadulterated feelings would be shocked at many a true story which might be told, to warn you against this one grand inlet (small as it may appear), this grand inlet of every misery, of every vice. The lottery-office is resorted to for relief, and sinks the appalled youth tenfold deeper in debt. The annals of the gaming-house present many sad instances of precipitate ruin. Robbery, swindling, forgery, are the issue, in many cases—the lamentable issue of a silly youth running in debt.

I have hastened to the catastrophe; but possibly you intend never to approach those dreadful precipices. If so, avoid the first step; it is your only true safety. Never beguile yourself with the hope of stopping just where you at present propose. The way is

sloping, is slippery; the boundaries are ill defined. You will find yourself further gone than you intended, ere you are aware. Your fancied wants once indulged, will become clamorous, and plead in a manner which you, not having been accustomed to deny, will not be able steadily and eventually to resist. Then the helps around you, who have chained you thus fast, will never suffer you to stop; some new temptation, or some new scheme of profit, shall be suggested to you; and importunity, or threats, will succeed in plunging you still deeper into the dark abyss.

Do not imagine this to be mere painting, or the dotage of those who, no longer young themselves, grudge the little indulgences so natural to youth. Nay, believe me, it is no wish to diminish your joys which dictates these pages; rather it is the earnest hope of securing your enjoyments to you, which can only be done by your exertions of principle now, resolutely to resist the first, the smallest errors in economy.

CHAP. XIII.

ENTIRE EDUCATION IS FOR ETERNITY.

EDUCATION, in all its effects upon youth, has for its object to prepare them for their various duties in life. We know the period when it must finish; when the youth is launched upon life, whether completely rigged, whether thoroughly caulked, whether truly ballasted, and fully stored, or not; the signal strikes a salute of twenty-one, and off goes the vessel, to make its own way, to bear the buffet and the storm, to gather merchandize, and navigate according to the individual skill of the commander. We cannot but look with some anxiety at her motions; if, or not, she glides gracefully off the stocks; we watch to see whether she floats evenly, or has any unpropitious bias. Tutors, guardians, parents, friends, watch the first motion, and forbode, or hope, according to the tone of their own feelings.

The young man himself, however, had need to guard against one mistake : amid all these circumstances it would not be wonderful, if he should conclude that now, at least, his education is completed ;—the *Teens* over, become his own man, about to act for himself, at complete liberty, and taking his station in life.

If, however, he has been truly engaged in self-cultivation ; that is, if he has been watching his own mind, training his feelings, rising hereby into greater fitness for his present situation, he will find the same necessity for almost the same sort of process ; and his adroitness already attained will enable him, in a manner almost imperceptible, to continue his operations. Were he to ask his elders, he would find that during the time which elapsed between twenty and thirty, was shaped, and stored up, that knowledge by which the time from thirty to forty was made peculiarly productive. Persons still older would tell of superior wisdom, gathered long after forty, which had very beneficial influence on the declining years of life. Self-cultivation never

ceases. Where then shall we stop our exertions over our own minds? Nay, rather let us carry our ideas further, and survey this whole life itself as a season of education, intended, by its various scenes and exercises, to fit the man for a station, an important, an endless station, in the world of spirits.

Were man a creature of this present world only, all this bustle, and training, and care, were scarcely worth while for so short an existence, and that held by so uncertain a tenure.

Frequently, when much labour has been exerted on a lad, when the youth has received all with with avidity, when he has brought high talents, and great energy of mind, to bear on his individual pursuit; when the greatest hopes are formed of him, and anxiety herself smiles with expectation;—all is dashed at once: a hectic has undermined his constitution, it half helped his wonderful attainments, and now cuts them short at a stroke.— Sometimes the issue is not so sudden; the

youth is hearty, the man marries, his family rises, his business prospers ; when, at the turning point of three and thirty, a fever attacks him ; his full habit feeds it, his robust strength gives it power ; in the midst of all his schemes he is cut down ; all his talents are lost, his wealth greatly diminished, and his hopes dashed at a blow to the ground.—Or, still hale, the youthful candidate hopes to bring his talents to a proper market ; he has been several times within an ace of a lucrative appointment. His abilities, indeed, are highly esteemed ; but the booby of some great lord must be provided for, and talent must fast upon a promise. The disappointment is bitter, but he bears it ; his sunken eye shows he does not bear it without effort ; his diminishing ardour lets another and another opportunity slip by ; and with powers on which no cost or cultivation has been spared, he sinks unemployed, neglected, and dies of a broken heart.

In sad variety might instances like these be accumulated. They are not hinted at to

damp rising genius, or to repress mental energy, in any of its exertions; yet they would have a salutary influence should they impress the truth just stated—that were this life all, and being so uncertain as it is, it were hardly worth while to sacrifice to it so much preparation, and actual energy, as mind is capable of exerting.

But take eternity into the account, and the value of life rises; the value of mind, and the value of all that cultivates, adorns, and trains it. Those energies, which seem to have been wasted, when disappointment or death hinder them of their appropriate objects, will be found to have been highly useful, if, during all, the coming world were kept in sight. Whatever were the attainments made, if all tended to put heavenly things into a better train, to recommend, and exalt to the mind the one thing needful, all is well.

Supposing one is to exist in that unknown state, some education for it seems desirable. The thought of plunging into an unseen

world utterly unprepared for it, cannot be very agreeable ; yet this is hazarded,—nay, hazarded with the eyes open, by all who neglect religion. Much more becoming our intellectual character is it, to have an eye to our whole existence ; to look full in the face all we expect to come, and to prepare whatever may be needful for our safe arrival thither.

Religion is usually regarded as a thing by itself, which interferes and hinders our most necessary occupations ; which certainly cuts up by the roots all our pleasures, and spreads a veil of gloomy melancholy over the world, its busy concerns, and its most exquisite enjoyments. Is this the language of its friends or of its enemies ; of those who have cordially embraced it, or of those who wish to form an excuse for keeping aloof ? The whole account is false : it arises from misconception ; it will be disavowed by every one who has actually known its sweet and salutary influence.

Rather say, that if, at the talismanic touch of religion, life changes its appearance, it is seen

in its true colours; many of its illusions die away, and what it is in reality starts out. It is the only touchstone by which its true value can be known; that hydrostatic balance which takes away the imposing form of bulk, and reduces every thing to its specific gravity. The rattle, the gew-gaw, the gilt gingerbread, are appreciated rather low by ripening reason; acquaintance with things much more important has reduced their value; and desires quite of another nature annihilate all the once eager wishes to possess and to enjoy them. Reason ripens. Ripening reason will frequently repeat this humiliating experiment, and will snatch out of our hand—rather engage us to throw away one after another—some of our most valued enjoyments. Ripening reason, in short, discovers that nothing in all this world is at all adequate to its cultivated, enlarging capacities. Intellect begins to spurn the baubles it has been amused with. And though, like a pettish child, it is tired of all, yet it knows not where to look for any thing better. Beauty, with all its fascination, grows stale; fame is a plant of too tardy a growth to

be worth waiting for ; ambition makes weary and giddy ; and wealth, though to the last held obstinately, is yet found to be incapable of one-half which it was supposed able to do, and is discovered to have a debasing, benumbing effect, upon every mind which is cordially attached to it. Disgusted with life, the mind, ill at ease, yet clings to it, unable to devise any joy new, or poignant, or satisfying. It is in this state of mind, whether it take place early or late, that religion presents her interminable perspective. The actual value of all at present possessed is rendered very doubtful by it ; but its relative value as it respects eternity begins to appear. True, fast diminishes the apparent bulk of our most showy possessions, but life itself rises in our estimation, and many of its exercises are seen with other eyes.

The situation in life, once so eagerly the object of our ambition, was obtained ; and we now feel it to be the very thing which has absorbed all our faculties, debased all our principles, and left us on the edge of eternity,

worse than unprepared, loaded with a cruel burden of enormous crimes. The sorrow we dreaded, which stripped us, which blasted all our prospects in life, has, however, given us time for thinking, and disposed us, though with a broken heart, to listen to proposals of treasure which cannot be stolen, of an inheritance which is safely reserved. The idea of eternity rushes upon the mind, and makes all the puny concerns of time appear in their own littleness. Intellectuality is dissatisfied with earthly things; and conscious immortality looks dismayed on all around, by which the soul has been cheated, and longs for something suited to its coming existence; it can find this only in the pages of religion.

Let us state a better case. Let us suppose the youth, the highly-favoured youth, taught, led, cheered, by religion as his best companion and friend from his early life. From how many snares which ruin others will he be protected; from how many deceptions will he be preserved? The worldly wonder to see him unmoved by what excites them to madness:

the truth is, he sees their madness, and fears to be bit. He is occupied with better things and has no need of their violent stimulants. Has he sorrows, they are of admirable use to him, they loosen his mind from earthly enjoyments. The stated return of sacred seasons and services he hails ; they bring to his mind unseen realities, and initiate him in joys which are well preserved for his use. Amid all the pleasures of life, religion keeps him to that moderate use which avoids intoxication ; which long preserves the powers of enjoyment, and which leaves him master of himself all the while. Religion was of excellent use to him in his most laborious businesses : it settled many points presently, and adjusted claims, and smoothed down irritation, with admirable simplicity. And in the darkness of afflictions then shone forth her lamp with most brilliancy ; religion lightened his sorrows which seemed so heavy, by a comparison with that eternal weight of glory toward which they clear the way.

The world have watched the man ; have

seen him grow rich, but have not been aware of his internal growth, and mental treasures ; or they have seen him grow poor, and have pitied him ; their pity was little needed, for his heart was, by every scene, as by every lesson at school, receiving good impressions, and making progress in that best of education—that which prepares for an eternal world.

Do not imagine, when we attribute such admirable efficacy to religion, that we mean by the term any mere routine of rites and duties. That sort of religion touches not the heart, and is itself among the most deceptive things by which souls are ruined. No, that sweet piety we recommend is a heart united to God. This cannot take place till sin is repented of, till the Saviour's atoning blood is applied, nor till the regenerating influence of the Holy Spirit is felt in its full activity. These ideas are usually scouted ; the very terms are out of fashion. Be it so. As long, however, as man is a guilty creature, none of his own modes of approaching God can suffice ; happy is it, when, either sooner or later, the mind

discerns its true misery by sin, then, and not till then, will the only method of mercy be discerned, accepted, rejoiced in.

But the youth spurns religion, especially any thing that pretends to lay hold of his heart, and rule him in a manner so complete. Well, what then ? He was brought up to attend divine service ; this was often very inconvenient. He had some qualms of conscience when he first began to break the Sabbath, but they soon wore off. He had some fears about wickedness, and hell, but he met with notions which set him quite at ease. He has lived a merry life, though his constitution is a little broken down. He carried his schemes through like a man ; making use of fools or knaves, as best suited his own purpose. It was necessary to deceive some for their own good ; it was necessary to quiet others as he could. He has succeeded, and is esteemed by the world a clever fellow. Without doubting his talents, I only ask, has not this man been in a course of education too ? His mind is much altered from what it was in youth ; he has

learned, he has done, and he now is—what? Let him launch into the world of spirits, he will find his appropriate station; his education has not fitted him for heaven: his schemes, his principles, his feelings, his hard heart, his callous conscience, all smell of another place. He has gained sad eminence, made lamentable proficiency; has been an apt scholar; very obedient, when he thought himself free. As a brand fitted for the burning, on whom the fire has begun to kindle, there lies he, on his dying bed, dreadfully prepared, well educated for a world of woe.

But I cannot leave you with so sad an impression. Let us return to the pious youth, to the man of religion. He felt, all the way he travelled, his pilgrim character; he perceived the value of the world, and used it as the master of it, not as its slave. He found it of admirable service in curing him of too great attachment to its attractions; of admirable efficacy in training his mind to higher ambition. Many a lesson has he learned; his long experience has been of excellent advantage to him;

he is become wise, and prudent, and rich. His knowledge will go with him; his wisdom will pass at the great tribunal; his riches are of a nature to endure. His hopes are well founded, not on himself, but on the Saviour; his feelings are in admirable training, filled with joy at the prospect, the hope of everlasting life. Like the head scholar about to leave the university, and take his station at court about the prince; so waits the man of piety; well educated for heaven, whither all his cultivation has pointed, ready to depart, and enter into glory. Be ye followers of them, who, through faith and patience, are now inheriting the promises.

FINIS.

S. Curtis, Camberwell Press.

1. The first part of the document is a list of names and addresses of the members of the committee.

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3. The second part of the document is a list of names and addresses of the members of the committee.

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5. The third part of the document is a list of names and addresses of the members of the committee.







